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## **THE PERISHING SOUL.**



# THE PERISHING SOUL;

OR,

The Scriptural Doctrine of the Destruction of Sinners.

WITH A VIEW OF

ANCIENT JEWISH OPINION AND CHRISTIAN BELIEF  
DURING THE FIRST AND SECOND CENTURIES.

BY

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"ANCIENT LANDMARKS," "THE SACRIFICE FOR SIN,"  
ETC. ETC.

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101. i. 186.



"We are a sweet savour of Christ . . . in them that perish . . . the savour of death unto death."

2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

"The one (*i.e.* the souls of the pure), appearing to be worthy of God, do not die at all; but the others are punished so long as God pleases both that they should be, and should be punished."

JUSTIN MARTYR, *Trypho*, § 5.

## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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IF it be true that the doctrine of endless suffering furnishes at once a most formidable obstacle to the reception of the Bible, and a subject of agonising perplexity to many of the most devout believers—while yet the Bible itself gives no sanction to the doctrine—then no apology is required for any sincere attempt to clear away from the pure page of Inspiration that dust which has unhappily gathered around it in connection with the present subject. And if, on the other hand, the very popular theory of a universal restoration to God and bliss be as really an error of the most unscriptural and pernicious kind, then on that ground also, it must be of the last importance to exhibit what the Scripture actually teaches in regard to the doom of the ungodly. As a compromise between these two extremes, the idea has lately been started that an existence spent in everlasting fire may, after all, be a state not of wretched antagonism, but of quiet submission, to the righteous Judge—a condition of dishonour rather than of suffering. The one antidote to all such

views must be sought in an unbiassed interpretation of the divine record. And that there now prevails a widespread dissatisfaction with the special interpretation so long and generally received admits not of question. Tokens of this meet us on every side. Thus in such a publication as the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (Oct., 1872, p. 702), we find a minister of the Scotch Free Church, writing: "The idea of permanent and unrelieved, not to say endless suffering, is intolerably oppressive, and every one longs to see some escape from it. Yet there is in the popular mind a fundamental honesty and instinct for truth which have hitherto prevented men from throwing off the belief in eternal punishment, though few discoveries would be hailed with more universal joy than that which enabled us to believe that one day, however distant, all men should be delivered from suffering. If we could even take advantage of the cloud which undoubtedly does rest on the future of the wicked, and believe that death eternal might amount to an extinction of consciousness or of being, that would be a welcome alleviation. But certainly we can find little comfort or see little promise of alleviation in any theory of universal restitution that we have yet heard."

To assist such enquiries is the special aim of the present volume. And it is high time surely that candid men should cease attempting to damage our cause by contemptuously hurling at us the term 'destructionists.' For such, doubtless, were our Lord and His apostles as much as we, the only question being in what sense they

were so. But for one believer in the Bible thus to treat another too much resembles the practice of the professing Christian who sneers at other professors as being 'saints,' or whatever else the Bible calls them.

Suffice it to add that in the present edition the first part has been entirely re-cast and considerably enlarged, thus supplying, it is hoped, a more suitable contribution to this radical truth in the Christian system, that however protracted and terrible the retribution awaiting the wicked at the judgment-day, there is yet no real immortality for sinful men apart from fellowship with God's Christ as dying for them and living in them.

JAMAICA, *January*, 1874.



# CONTENTS.

## PART I.—SCRIPTURAL VIEW.

LETTER	Page
I. Alleged Presumptions in favour of Unconditional Immortality . . . . .	1
II. Immortality in the Old Testament . . . . .	14
III. Immortality in the New Testament—Miscellaneous Passages . . . . .	30
IV. Everlasting Life—especially in the Gospel of John . . . . .	46
V. Life and Death . . . . .	62
VI. The Living God . . . . .	70
VII. 'Destroy,' 'Perish' (ἀπόλλυμι) as used in the Septuagint . . . . .	79
VIII. 'Απόλλυμι (Destroy) in the Gospels . . . . .	89
IX. 'Απόλλυμι (Lose) in the Gospels . . . . .	99
X. 'Απόλλυμαι (Perish) in the Gospels . . . . .	108
XI. Further Teaching of our Lord in regard to Punishment . . . . .	118
XII. Our Lord's Teaching (continued) . . . . .	126
XIII. The Unquenchable Fire—Undying Worm—Everlasting Judgment . . . . .	132
XIV. Everlasting Punishment . . . . .	138
XV. The Everlasting Fire . . . . .	145
XVI. Apostolic Teaching . . . . .	154
XVII. 'Απόλλυμι (Perish, Destroy) in the Epistles to the Corinthians . . . . .	166
XVIII. Remaining Epistles of Paul . . . . .	174
XIX. Apostolic Doctrine of Destruction (concluded) . . . . .	184
XX. The Doctrine of Future Punishment in the Apocalypse . . . . .	192
XXI. The Doctrine of Destruction in relation to other Truth . . . . .	204

LETTER	Page
XXII. Some Objections considered . . .	219
XXIII. Thoughts on Universal Restoration . . .	227
XXIV. God All in All . . . . .	245

## PART II.—HISTORICAL VIEW.

I. Ancient Jewish Opinion as to Future Punishment . . .	255
II. Ancient Jewish Opinion as in the Book of Enoch, the Book of Isaiah, the Talmud, and Josephus . . .	266
III. Early Christian Belief—the Apostolic Fathers . . .	2-3
IV. Christian Belief in the Second Century . . .	306
V. Theophilus; Athenagoras; Tatian . . .	319
VI. Clement of Alexandria . . . . .	327
VII. Irenaeus . . . . .	336

**Part II.**

SCRIPTURAL VIEW.





# THE PERISHING SOUL.

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## CHAPTER I.

### ALLEGED PRESUMPTIONS IN FAVOUR OF UNCONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY.

THE question to be discussed is not whether all shall rise from the dead with a view to judgment; nor do we dispute either the severity or the long continuance of the retribution that awaits the ungodly. In regard to all that the Divine Word is too definite to warrant a doubt. As little do we question whether man was originally destined for immortality. But we ask whether man, as a fallen creature, is still destined for it—irrespectively of his participating in the salvation of Christ. The question is a great one, involving issues of the utmost moment, both as regards the character of God, and the interests of man. And yet, as we are well aware, it is one which, at the hands of many, may expect but little toleration. The point at issue they regard as conclusively settled long ago, and therefore entirely without the range of things that may legitimately be investigated now. The very heathen will be summoned up by them to rebuke the irreligiousness of

the enquiry; while the whole constitution of the Christian redemption will be held as solemnly condemning it. And then there is the formidable array of authority which can be pointed to. We may be reminded of all who, from the days of Plato to those of Butler, have strenuously upheld that which we are arrogantly attempting to pull down. The great Romish system and the Churches of the Reformation, however differing in other things, have, as we may be reminded, agreed here. And yet all this will not settle the question. We still venture to ask what Moses, and Jesus, and the Apostles taught. Nor dare we to take it for granted that they must have taught a particular thing, simply because so many of the great and good say that they did. There are always reasons enough why we should call no man, nor yet body of men, master; while in this case, and at this time, there are very urgent reasons why we should strictly examine what the Divine Word says on the subject. To go against that stately array of authority which declares so positively in favour of an unconditional immortality may be hard. To run counter to the word of God, if it declares otherwise, should be not hard, but impossible.

Before proceeding, however, to the direct Scriptural teaching on the question, it will be of consequence to attend to certain alleged presumptions in support of the ordinary view of immortality, which have been much relied on as supplying a ready negative to the view for which we contend.

(1) *The soul is immaterial* (it is urged by some), and

*therefore immortal.* But why, *therefore*? Would it not be more reasonable to say, 'Created, *and therefore* destructible'? For how can we conceive of the power to create, without a corresponding power to destroy?—of the power of an Almighty Being to bestow, without an equal power to withdraw? Is it imaginable that He who brings into being should not have the ability and liberty to put out of being again? True, it is said; but the soul being immaterial is essentially simple and uncompounded, and therefore incapable of that dissolution which we understand by 'destruction.' But who, I ask, knows anything of the constitution of a soul? We can only speak of it as having no *material* parts: Are we equally certain that it is without constituent parts or elements of a *spiritual* kind—entirely in the dark as we are as to what any spiritual substance or being consists of? One thing we know—that the smallest organism or organ in the material creation presents in its little self a world of wonders of endless complexity.

Are we quite sure then that soul or spirit is in utter contrast to whatever is physical; and, as being immaterial, is absolutely simple and structureless? For we should need to be sure of this ere we could legitimately affirm that a soul, unlike a body, was incapable of destruction in the sense of *dissolution*. And suppose we *were* sure of that, or—such certainty being unattainable—suppose we assume it, what will follow? Simply this, that while the body, as a compound thing, is destroyed by dissolution of its parts, the soul, as being uncompounded, would have to be destroyed *in some other way*. For that

the fact of creation involves the quality of destructibility we must admit, unless we are prepared to think of the Creator as mastered by His own workmanship—as having voluntarily brought into being a thing which, from the necessity of the nature given to it, can never be deprived of being again. And this too, although that creature has become so utterly opposed to the Divine mind, that to exist for ever can only mean to maintain an everlasting opposition to the Creator, with all the miserable consequences entailed by such opposition—and all because the Creator has chosen to endow that creature with an immaterial principle!

(2) *The analogy of the whole material creation* is constantly adduced to show the extreme improbability of—observe what—the soul's *annihilation*. But why say annihilation?—thus gratuitously introducing into the case a purely metaphysical difficulty. Why not say 'destruction,' in accordance alike with the phraseology of Scripture, and of the doctrine objected to? And then all nature, instead of furnishing an analogy against, will furnish one unbroken analogy in favour of that doctrine. For of all natural things there is not one more flagrant than the fact of organized beings coming to an end through a process of destruction—whatever the destination of their component elements.

In a word, this argument from analogy is manifestly fallacious. For, either the soul is a complex spiritual organism after the analogy of material organisms, or it is not.

*If it be*—then like these it can be dissolved, and so

destroyed, without any departure from analogy, or recourse to that annihilation which is held, rightly or wrongly, to be incredible.

*If it be not*—there is no room for analogy between the cases, and none therefore for the violation of it. The two classes of objects would then be so unlike in their mode of existence as to remove all room for comparison in the manner of their destruction.

(3) It is maintained that man, as *created in the Divine image*, cannot properly be regarded as otherwise than immortal.

A common answer to this is, that the fact of such creation no more involves our immortality than it involves our omnipotence or omniscience. And yet it may fairly be urged, that while the Divine image in man cannot involve the absurdity of a creature's participation in the attributes of infinity, still such a resemblance as was certainly established between man and his Creator would ill comport with the design of a merely temporary existence; and that, in fact, God must have intended for immortality those whom He was pleased to honour with a moral likeness to Himself. Granted. Does it therefore follow that man, after losing the image, still retained the immortality designed for him? Does it not rather seem as if the immortality were a *part of the image*—the two being kept or lost together? And if it be so unnatural to view the 'divine' in man as only temporary, it may be as unnatural to view the 'devilish' in him as everlasting. What, in a word, if the points of connection be these:—

The image of God, and immortality ;

The lost image, and lost immortality ;

A capacity for the image, and a capacity for immortality ;

The regained image, and regained immortality.

This, of course, is addressed to those who believe that man, having lost his Creator's image, requires to be renewed in it. (Col. iii. 10 ; Eph. iv. 24.)

(4) *Man's wonderful capacity for advancement in knowledge and wisdom* is held to be another presumption in favour of a universal immortality. For why such capacity, without the scope for its exercise ? Why an unlimited expansibility, with only a limited field for expansion ? The idea is a natural one ; but the case is by no means so very simple as the supposed question assumes. Mere power of expansion cannot of itself furnish any presumption of permanence. Every day we find men expanding in the exercise of their ingenuity, till it becomes needful to put an end to their liberty, and perhaps their life. And if it be so in secular concerns, how much more under the government of the All-holy, where nothing is esteemed but goodness only, and where the eating of the tree of knowledge may be the direct means of exclusion from the tree of life. Intellectual expansibility a presumption for immortality ! Speak rather of expansion in goodness as the pledge and earnest of it. But even then leave it to the Judge Himself to say what He accepts as goodness—the Judge who has already declared it to be the universal character of the race for which the immortality is claimed, “ There

is none righteous—there is none that doeth good—no, not one.” For, whatever men may presume, thus has God pronounced—“The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1 John ii. 17.)<sup>1</sup>

(5.) *The longings and anticipations*, as well as the *fears of men, in regard to the future*, are regarded by many as sufficient evidence of immortality. For we would never, it is argued, have been permitted to entertain such sentiments, if it were not the Creator’s design

<sup>1</sup> The argument from human capacity is drawn out by Dr. Channing in his sermon on immortality with his usual power. His points are these. (1.) While the perfection of a tree lies in a *definite product*, that of the mind lies in an *indefinite energy*. (2.) While the indefinite growth of the tree would interfere with every thing else, the indefinite expansion of mind harmonizes with and perfects the system of nature. (3.) To the tree destruction is no loss; “but the thought of the human faculties being extinguished—of truth and virtue, those images of God, being blotted out—of progress towards perfection broken off almost at its beginning—is a thought fitted to overwhelm a mind conscious of its own spiritual nature.” (4.) While the tree is useful in its destruction, mind would be useless. [All this, it will be observed, refers only to mind as in its *right moral state*, and therefore can prove nothing against our view. It is added however.] Again. (1.) Even crime shows the greatness of mind, by proving moral freedom. (2.) Men sin through temptation; but temptation is indispensable for the exercise of virtue. [But if indefinite advance in *goodness* proves immortality, how can the contrary course lead to the same end? Is it imagined that man is too great to permit of his being legitimately destroyed?] (3.) Guilt anticipates and proves future retribution [which however is not *immortality*]. (4.) The evil in the world gives occasion to great moral strength, and to singular devotion and virtue in the *good* [and therefore, of course, adds to the argument for *their* immortality].

What, after all this, we ask, is the meaning of saying, “Heaven is not for those who live in sin now: *Immortality should begin here*”? For what is that but just our doctrine?



to substantiate them. So clearly, in fact, has every appetite been provided with its appropriate satisfaction, that the longing in question may safely be accepted as a proof of the thing longed for, and the fear of the thing feared.

But what after all is the object of these anticipations? What is it that the restless human spirit concerns itself so anxiously about? About an actual immortality and eternity? or simply about a future with a much-desired good or much-dreaded evil?—a future which, however certain in itself, presents to its expectants no very definite aspect either as to the filling up or the duration of it? Which of these views forms the basis of that anxiety which has been more or less common among men? The latter, we are strongly inclined to believe. But be it so that it is a strict immortality which man in any case contemplates and pants for; what sort of immortality is it? Is it either a state of ultimate good commencing with the pains of a purgatory, or a state of unmitigated evil stretching out into the torments of an endless hell? Is such the immortality that man desires? Or is it not rather for an immediate entrance upon a state of unbroken felicity that he longs? Such doubtless is his dream. And the dream proves either the thing longed for, or nothing at all. For the anticipation of an immediate heaven can by no possibility prove either a state of agonizing discipline to begin with, or a state of woe insufferable and unending. A desire may prove the natural capacity of him who entertains it; but it can

never prove that the thing desired is to be his, in spite of any obstacles that the Divine government may have put in the way. Nothing has been more common among men than to say, Peace, peace; but the expectation is not held to be any guarantee for the enjoyment.

(6) The alleged *prevalence of the belief in immortality in all ages and countries*<sup>2</sup> is held as a strong presumption of its validity. For how can this belief have arisen, it is said, except from a primeval revelation? In reply we ask, Does the fact really stand as thus alleged? Is it immortality, as now contended for, that has been so generally accepted among men? We firmly believe not. A universal belief in immortality! Buddhism alone numbers amongst its adherents a third part of the human family; and it precludes the very idea of immortality by proclaiming the absorption of souls into the one great *All*. We may judge also of the style in which the Eastern nations held immortality, when we see with what ease they cast it away for *nirvāṇa*. Nor need we wonder; for whatever they might have heard of the immortality of the *soul*, there was but little room left for the immortality of the *man*, amid the

<sup>2</sup> The following is the most extreme of the statements of this sort that we remember to have met with: "As there is in the human heart a conviction of immortality implanted there for the wisest and holiest of purposes, so there never has been a nation, never a tribe, and probably never an individual, who did not, whatever profession he might make, believe in the endless existence of a soul." "The conviction remains (in spite of all attempts to choke it), that, in breathing into man's nostrils the breath of life, God infused into him a portion of His own eternity."—Rev. H. CHRISTMAS, *Echoes of the Universe*, 7th edit. p. 273.

endless metempsychoses with which they had been made familiar. As for the Greeks—not to speak of the extraordinary barrenness of their early belief in regard to futurity—we have in later times the testimony of no less than Plato,<sup>3</sup> that “*most men* assert that the soul, when separated from the body, will be *immediately dispersed and destroyed*.” To what extent the Romans came to be of the same mind we need not say. Other great families of the ancient world held much more firmly indeed by a belief in *futurity*; but *futurity*, we must remember, is not *immortality*. Thus, while it may be clear enough that the modern African and the aboriginal American cherish the same belief, nothing could be more unwarrantable than to say that they entertain the thought of immortality. No people perhaps, or rather priesthood, has shown so strong a tendency to the idea of the *everlasting*, apart from Scriptural revelation, as the Egyptian. And yet even in regard to them we find it said, “It is not clear how long the beatified state was to last, or whether it was to be eternal;”—while “the duration of the state of woe is also left uncertain, and it is by no means clear that the philosophy of the priests, still less the popular belief in such mysterious subjects, was fixed and determinate.”<sup>4</sup>

So much for the alleged belief in immortality. And thus, when asked how the *fact* is to be accounted for, we might fairly pause till we see that it *is* a fact. But without waiting for that, and taking the statement at

<sup>3</sup> *Phædo*, § 68.

<sup>4</sup> *Ancient Egypt*. By Canon Trevor, p. 201.

the very utmost of its real value, we account for the belief just as we do for other very ancient and widespread beliefs—namely, as the human corruption of a Divine revelation, or primeval tradition. God having originally “set eternity in man’s heart,”<sup>5</sup> both put immortality before his eyes, and engaged for its restoration, through the woman’s Seed, when lost. And this, we are persuaded, is amply sufficient to furnish the basis of all that can really be shown as to the world’s belief. But if every article in regard to man’s innocence, fall, and redemption—yes, every thing connected with religion—has been so grievously corrupted, it would be more than strange if this matter of immortality had escaped the universal fate. Hence the view that *that* has been generally accepted by men, *in some such form as it was revealed by God*, is as unlikely as possible to be correct. On the contrary, we may safely conclude that it was *not revealed* as it has been maintained. The conclusion is that, if we want to know the primeval revelation on the subject, we must, as in regard to all such matters, go for it to the Bible.

(7) To mention one more of these arguments—*Those whose nature the Son of God assumed, and for whom He died, cannot be less than immortal.* And truly it is inconceivable that for any merely temporary purpose, or on behalf of creatures not framed for immortality, such a transaction could have taken place. The design and issues of the Atonement must assuredly be of an infinite reach. Yes, and let it be freely granted that the

<sup>5</sup> See note in next chap. on Eccles. iii. 11.

evil from which it delivers has its own infinity as truly as the good to which it conducts. But if eternal life be an infinite good, is not everlasting destruction as certainly an infinite evil? And who, in attempting to settle the proportion between the great Sacrifice and its results, will venture to pronounce that the Redeemer's offering must have been either meaningless or extravagant, unless, in addition to the infinite evil of everlasting destruction, he be permitted to assume the infinite horror of everlasting torment? And yet there are those who declare that the whole basis of redemption is gone unless an assumption so extraordinary be allowed them! And there are those who decline all fellowship with us, because we no longer agree with them in regard to that from which their Saviour's death has delivered them!

Such are the chief presumptions commonly adduced in favour of unconditional immortality—the ready inference being that *it is so*, and *must be so*. Any other conclusion, in short, is held unworthy of consideration—any other view of humanity as too degrading to be entertained. Hence the confidence with which the doctrine is maintained—the impatience, the irritation, the bitterness, with which the denial or question of it is so frequently met. To speak of man as liable to *perish*, in the ordinary sense of that word—to represent him as not inherently, unconditionally, immortal—but as under a veritable death-sentence, and as graciously offered an actual immortality with all its glory, as God's gift through Christ—this is held to be such a degrading and

demeaning of man as would overturn the whole moral constitution of our world. It is regarded, on the other hand, as an essential ingredient in man's dignity that he be endowed with the *capacity* not only of resisting his Maker, but of spending eternity as an incorrigible rebel, and an immortal sufferer—ever receding further and further from his God—sinking lower and lower into a bottomless abyss of woe! Yes, such is the dignity contended for! Such is one of the objections to conditional immortality, that it takes away from human nature the one element which supplies at once the capacity and the opportunity for endless sinning and endless suffering!

## CHAPTER II.

## IMMORTALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

PROCEEDING from alleged presumptions to Scripture evidence, and commencing with the Old Testament, we ask whether that contains one single direct statement, or one hint however indirect, or one distinct principle the most general, which should induce us to believe in an unconditional immortality. That such proof is constantly held forth every one knows; and our present concern is to form a just estimate of its value. Is it unfair, then, to say that the proof attempted consists very much in a reference to Gen. i. 26; ii. 7; Isa. xxxiii. 14; Dan. xii. 2?

The subject of the Divine image in man, as it appears in the first of these passages, has been before us already, and will be again. The second of them informs us that "God formed man out of the dust of the ground; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

"Breathed into his nostrils the breath of life"—and how, it is very confidently asked, can this involve less than a true immortality? Nay rather, let us say, how can we regard it as involving anything approaching

to that, when we find the same expression, only in a stronger form, applied to every living thing that perished in the flood? "All in whose nostrils was the breath of *the spirit* of life died." (Gen. vii. 22.) Yes, but "man became a *living soul*," it is urged. And so, we reply, did "the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath *living soul*;" and to every beast, fowl, and reptile, "wherein is *living soul*," was the green herb given for meat. (i. 20, 30.)

Take now the next passage: "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"—a passage regarded by many as an unanswerable proof for the sufferings throughout eternity, and therefore for the immortality, of the wicked.<sup>1</sup> But whence, in all fairness we may ask, does such proof come? Not certainly from the general style of thought exhibited by the Old Testament. For not from beginning to end—unless, strange to say, here only—does it suggest the idea of a miserable immortality. And as little does it anywhere present us with aught akin to the extraordinary spectacle of conviction and alarm supposed to be thus expressed by certain sinners of Isaiah's day.

Is it the word 'everlasting,' then, that shuts us up to so extraordinary a conclusion? Neither can we listen to such an assertion for a moment. For it is notorious that that word (*oldm*) is constantly employed in another

<sup>1</sup> So it is viewed by such a critic as Dr. Henderson. See also *Alexander On Isaiah*.



sense. Its ordinary application, in short, is either to the entire duration of the subject in hand; or, as very frequently, to a long but indefinite future. Thus we find not only the 'earth' and the 'hills' spoken of as everlasting, but Canaan is an 'everlasting possession' for Israel, and the allotted ground for the Levites; so Jerusalem was to be a place for God's name, and the temple a house for Him 'for ever.' The Sabbath, the sacrifices, the Aaronic priesthood, the Levitical ceremonies—all were to be everlasting; nor is there any phrase more common than that of 'everlasting statute' in regard to things so soon to "wax old and vanish away." Thus also the slave might become his master's 'for ever,' and David was to be, for an equal term, the servant of Achish. The stones of Gilgal were to be an 'everlasting' memorial, and the desolation of Ai as permanent. Caleb's inheritance and Gehazi's leprosy were both to be their children's 'for ever.' Young Samuel was to appear before the Lord 'for ever,' that is "all the days of his life;" and Eli, as well as the priest after him, was to walk before the Lord 'for ever.' Considering, in short, how the word is constantly employed, we can no more argue for an eternity of suffering from the passage in Isaiah than we can argue against a resurrection from the one in which Solomon speaks of the grave as man's 'everlasting home,' or Jeremiah of death as an 'everlasting sleep.' (Eccles. xii. 5; Jer. li. 39, 57.) How is it possible, then, considering all this, to disjoin the 'fire' of the verse in question from the consuming fire of the context?—"Your breath, as fire, shall devour you;"

"The people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burnt up in the fire." Or how can we overlook the kindred notice in the next chapter of the judgment on Edom?—"The land shall become burning pitch; it shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever." (xxxiv. 9, 10.) Such is the actual context of the passage before us. And even if it were not, with what conscience or intelligence could we ignore the regular prophetic style according to which it is said—"I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in a land which thou knowest not; for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn for ever"?—"I will kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched;"—"Lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." (Jer. xvii. 4, 27; xxi. 12.) Can we question, after this, what the sinners of Isaiah's time meant when they said, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with burnings for ever?" For what aroused their alarm but the Divine threatenings? And what threatenings but such as are thus recorded?

It seems hardly needful after this to refer to Dan. xii. 2—"Some to shame and everlasting contempt." For, even if the word 'everlasting' had in the Old Testament that general usage which it has not, still the expression here employed must refer to the duration of the *senti-ment* entertained towards the wicked, not the duration of the wicked themselves. Just as Cain, who passed

away in the world's infancy, is still its abhorrence, and will be while it lasts; or as the threatening ran against the rebels of Jeremiah's day—"I will bring upon you an everlasting reproach, and a perpetual shame which shall not be forgotten." (Jer. xxiii. 40; cf. Ps. lxxviii. 66.) So the land of Israel was to be "an everlasting hissing;" while of the people "the everlasting confusion should never be forgotten." (Jer. xviii. 16; xx. 11.)

So much for certain assumed proofs from the Old Testament of an unconditional human immortality.<sup>2</sup> The references on the other hand to futurity are extremely impressive, and clearly indicative at times of the immortality of the righteous.

Thus, for example, we have a future life distinctly pointed to—as when Job (allowing such to be his meaning) revels in the thought of a resurrection (Job xix. 25); or Isaiah glowingly foretells it (xxvi. 19); or David speaks of going to the child (2 Sam. xii. 23); or Solomon declares that "the spirit of man goeth upward," while that of the beast "goeth downward;" and again, that "the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." (Eccles. iii. 21; xii. 7.) This last, however, though it certainly

<sup>2</sup> Some will be surprised to find adduced with the same view the passage, "How shall man be just with God?" (Job ix. 2.) And yet we have been told that "this question indicates an awful conviction that man is . . . in danger of everlasting punishment." (See *Connection of Old and New Testaments*, by Dr. W. L. Alexander, p. 129.) Our answer is, that the passage teaches neither more nor less than Ps. cxxx. 3; cxliii. 2. And if we want an Old Testament view of the bar and the judgment, we have it in the first psalm.

proves a futurity, proves no immortality of the spirit, any more than it proves the endless sleep and final dissolution of the body at death. Enough that the spirit shall return to God for judgment. As to the issue of the judgment there is nothing here.<sup>3</sup>

Again, in such great facts as the translation of Enoch and Elijah; also in such a circumstance as the appearance of Samuel to the king (1 Sam. xxviii.), we have distinct views of a future state of being. With these we may class the representation of the king of Babylon in hades (Isa. xiv.), which recalls the general announcement, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." (Ps. ix. 17.)—"Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Ps. xvi.), though in a very different tone, teaches the same lesson. "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;"<sup>4</sup> "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;"<sup>5</sup> "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave;"<sup>6</sup> "O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction;"<sup>7</sup> "The Lord is the strength of my heart,

<sup>3</sup> We find in the same book a striking expression worthy of notice: "He hath set the *world* (*olâm*) in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God doeth, &c. (Eccles. iii. 11.)" But why not read, "Hath put *eternity* in their heart"?—that is, hath imprinted in them a sense of the 'eternal,' which, being at serious variance with the common style of viewing present things, becomes the occasion of much perplexity. Now any one may, without affecting our general conclusion, explain this of 'eternity' in the strictest sense. But it is certainly more in harmony with Old Testament usage to regard it as expressive of an undefined futurity.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. xxiii. <sup>5</sup> Ps. xvii. 15. <sup>6</sup> Ps. xlix. 9. <sup>7</sup> Hosea xiii. 14.

and my portion for ever. Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory ;”<sup>8</sup>—these and other such sayings sufficiently express the hope of a happy futurity. That the patriarchs lived and died in such a hope is distinctly taught in the New Testament, the evidence for it being this, that they so behaved as to “show plainly that they sought a country—a better country, even an heavenly—looking for *the* city which hath *the* foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”<sup>9</sup> Nor can such hope be regarded as cancelled, either by the absence of more positive declarations, or by those sad outbursts of anguish which we sometimes meet with in the Old Testament saints at the prospect of death. For a state so full of darkness in regard to its opening scenes—a darkness perhaps of long duration—might well cloud the mind of a troubled Hebrew, notwithstanding that confidence of continued fellowship with God which seems to have been, not so much a matter of mere hope as an essential element of his spiritual being—an unfailing intuition of his living and lasting relationship to the living and everlasting God. When God, in addressing His people, styled Himself “the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob,” He plainly spoke as “the God not of the dead, but of the living.” And in so speaking He certainly meant it to be understood, as our Lord explained, that none who have been His servants, whether still in this world or out of it, are any of them extinct, but all “alive in regard to Him” (Luke xx. 38); and sure

<sup>8</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 24.<sup>9</sup> Heb. xi. 10.

therefore to continue alive so long as He retains the title of *their* God. But the more meaning we allow to expressions like these, it is all the more observable that they contain no assertion or implication of immortality as a thing common to all. Let us see whether, on the other hand, the Old Testament does not furnish a very sufficient negative to the idea of such an immortality.

Here, then—to begin with the earliest Divine treatment of man—is our first father, with the liberty of eating, one only excepted, of all the trees of the garden. Among these is the ‘tree of life.’ And, while that continues open to him, he has the assurance of ‘living for ever,’ body and soul alike, in a happiness which nothing can disturb. That this is the meaning of the arrangement made with him is commonly allowed. But, coming to the one forbidden tree, here is the alternative: “In the day that thou eatest thereof, *dying thou shalt die.*” Did this also signify immortality; that is to say, a true and real life in endless misery, whatever the interruption, for a time, of the alliance between his body and his soul? For if *Adam*, as such, is really to retain his place among God’s creatures, he can never be permanently transformed into a disembodied spirit. Is this, then, the difference between the life promised and its alternative death—that the one was immortality to the *man* in a state of happiness; and the other, immortality to the *same man* in misery? Could it be thus that a God who had made Himself so familiar with His creature intended to be understood? Was it possible for our first father, in any measure, so to understand

the Divine Ruler? How much, indeed, he was able to take in of the fearful character of the death threatened, whether as to its entire period, or the mode of its infliction, we have no means of determining. But if we can understand anything at all, either of the language employed, or of Adam's capacity for taking it up, we can see that, as the words in their plain sense pointed to an end of the man's being, so he had no alternative but to anticipate, sooner or later, in one form or another, just such an event. For such is the meaning of death—the simple understood meaning of it—that meaning from which all the partial or figurative applications of the term derive their force. And it would require some very decisive reason indeed to show that the language, as addressed to Adam, was intended to be taken, not in this its plain, natural, accustomed sense, but rather in a sense immeasurably different. But let us look a little more closely into the matter.

“In the day that thou eatest thereof, *dying thou shalt die.*” The meaning is, Thou shalt surely die, or utterly die; or why not both in one? For, beyond all doubt, the destruction threatened would be as complete as it would be certain. “The wages of sin is death,”—whether that be viewed in connection with the body and its lamentable dissolution, or the soul and its miserable separation from the living God. Thus, from the moment of his eating of the forbidden tree, Adam, as a man fallen from God, would become a mortal, perishing, ruined creature. How far the sentence was to be actually carried out on the day of his sinning he could

but little understand ; and, in regard to that, may have miscalculated greatly. The event, however, would correct the miscalculation, even if a sufficient explanation did not follow close upon the offence. For then, at least, he came to understand that he was, beyond doubt, a perishing man. Now what that meant in regard to the body will hardly be questioned. To die, in that respect, certainly meant to *cease to live*, or be. And as we know of no resurrection of the body except as through the Second Adam, it follows that, *apart from redemption*, there must have been not a temporary, but an endless cessation of *bodily* life to man. That is to say, man in one department of his nature, or, which amounts to the same, man *as a complete human being*, each time that death overtook him, would have *ceased to be*. So opposed to all sound principle is it to assert that death *in no sense* indicates the *end* of human existence. But what right have we to assume that the same sentence of death, in its reference to the other part of human nature, instead of meaning the same or anything similar, involved an idea so entirely contrary as that of an endless and wretched existence in a state of penal separation from God ? Can it be possible that there is so little analogy, or rather so violent a discordance, between the destiny of these two elements which make up the one nature and being of man—and that too where the same word has been employed to express the treatment of each ?

And coming from the threatened penalty to the actual consequences of the transgression, whether does



it seem that the view now given is set aside or confirmed?

"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Such is the description given of the impending death; and such a view, however partial, ought surely to be taken as at least pointing in the direction of the actual and entire evil—not certainly in some direction altogether different from the one in which that evil really lies. For the 'returning to dust' is plainly a very important part of the sentence, "Dying thou shalt die," according to our view of the case. But how minute a part in any way, and how strangely unrepresentative of what becomes the great leading idea, if we take the contrary view—a view which more properly amounts to this, "Dying thou shalt never die!" Take, on the other hand, according to a very safe principle, the outer world as a parable or symbol of the inner; and take the soul and the body as very intimately united, whether in sin or in sentence; and then the 'returning to dust,' while it represents to the eye the death of the one, will represent also the penal dissolution of the other—not as of an immortal and indestructible substance, but as of a guilty agent, full of corruption, and worthy of death—a dissolution occupying any length of time, and attended with any amount of suffering which a righteous Judge may see fit to appoint.

An act of strange significance now follows the sentence as thus reiterated: "Lest the man put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the LORD God sent him forth from

the garden." This tree, we know, pointed to the grant of immortality as promised to Adam. But now that he has forfeited the blessing promised, no such anomaly can be allowed as the continued enjoyment of the empty symbol in the loss of the precious substance. Besides which, it is plain that the permission to eat of the tree of immortal life would have been as good as an engagement to continue that which the Sovereign had already withdrawn.—"So He drove out the man." Is not this the true account of the arrangement? And who are they that are to 'live for ever' now, but those only to whom by grace it is given "to eat of the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God"?

And was not this also, dimly indeed, yet truly, shadowed forth at Eden? The man is driven from the garden; the dying Adam is forced to turn his back upon the tree of life; and yet there takes place no blasting of the garden, or uprooting of the tree. These are allowed to stand as before; only for Adam is there no entrance now. The flaming sword effectually prohibits that. There is something better than a sword, however, at the gate of Eden. These cherubim—"living creatures" of future vision, nearest of created beings to the throne of the Eternal—they surely signify, in some form or other, that dying man may yet live, and, living, may eat of the tree in the midst. Nor was the road which led to a life so glorious left altogether in the dark. For even now did the dying victim, as it yielded up its life-blood, signify that through death there was to be a redemption of the forfeited life; and with this was combined the

assurance that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." But the serpent was "the devil that had the power of death;" and the victory over him could not mean less than the complete abolishing of the death which he had occasioned.

Thus, if man by sin has lost his immortality, there is provided One through whom he may regain it. To 'live for ever' is no longer the property of Adam, or the inheritance of his children. But enhanced beyond degree shall that highest of gifts come into the world again through "the Second Man, the Lord from heaven:"—"That, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

There is an important point worthy of attention here, though not bearing directly on immortality; and that is the manner in which life and death are spoken of in the promises and threatenings of the Old Testament. We are not speaking of the few cases in which 'life' is employed to express, entirely or partially, a good spiritual condition—such as "Your heart shall live that seek God," "Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee," "Hear, and your soul shall live." We speak simply of the ordinary views of life and death as presented in the Old Testament. And as the ground of all these there lies the principle, "He that doeth those things shall live by them" (Lev. xviii. 5; Rom. x. 5)—the 'doing' being expounded, and the 'living' re-asserted by a prophet, as in Ezek. xviii. 5-9. Now there is no question here

as to the developing of the 'living' into something higher in another state; nor yet as to the amount of satisfaction that might accrue to the obedient now. Enough that the 'living' refers simply to the temporal existence promised to the righteous; and the 'dying' to the counterpart evil as threatened to the unrighteous. That 'dying' might, indeed, be a shadow of something worse—being itself preceded or attended by great unhappiness. Still is the 'dying' itself just that which occurs every day before our eyes—the only supposable difference lying in the clearer manifestation of Divine judgment in connection with it. But come as they might, the executioners of the judgment were simply such matters as sword, famine, pestilence. And so when any one on whom the death was coming repents of his evil-doing, "He shall surely live (it is said of him), he shall not die." (Ezek. xxxiii.) Precisely in the same way are we to understand the much used and abused sentence, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezek. xviii. 4.) The transgressor shall be cut off—such is the entire sense. Temporal death is still the evil threatened. Hence it is wrong to employ that sentence as any proof of the doctrine of the final destruction of souls. *That* it does not prove, however it may foreshadow it. But *this*, in connection with the promises of life, these and other such words do prove; namely, that the Old Testament, whether in its earliest or its latest portions, handed over to the New, in all the entirety of their accepted sense, its promises of life and threatenings of death. And thus, though these give no direct information regarding

the immortality of the soul, they are of great value as illustrating the terms in which that subject is settled afterwards.

NOTE.—The following from the Memoir of Dr. John Duncan, 2nd edition, p. 230, will show how the Old Testament evidence for immortality appeared to such a man.—“Words and things which in themselves seem to have little weight acquire infinite importance when Jehovah is concerned in them. For example, the transactions of the first chapters of Genesis. Bearing this in mind, the account of man’s creation shows that he was *designed for immortality* [italics our own]. ‘In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,’ evidently implying that while he did not eat he should live. After the fall, that God still *designed man for immortal life* appears from His condescending to deal with our first parents, instead of instantly cutting them off; and still more from the nature of the promise, ‘The seed of,’ &c. What did man forfeit by the fall? Life. It was death that the Tempter had introduced. To overcome the serpent, therefore, was just to overcome death; and all God’s intercourse with man from that time was a proof of man’s immortality. Abel, in the very act of offering up an accepted sacrifice, was cut off, while Cain was spared. Enoch was a living proof of the truth that immortal life was the *portion of God’s people*. Passing on to Abraham, God appears to him, and offers Himself in all His fulness—‘I am God all-sufficient, walk before me.’ This was in fact a grant of life, the brightest and strongest that could be. The self-existent, the living God, gives Himself—‘I am thy God,’ ‘I will be a God unto thee.’ It could not be that God was not *able*; and if He had not been *willing* that His people should live for ever, was He ‘a God’ to them? (See Heb. xi. 16.) And here lies the point of our Lord’s argument with the Sadducees, ‘God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.’ From the first, therefore, in all His dealings with men, it has been about the communication of immortal life. Nothing less was worthy of Him. And when God gives Himself to be His people’s blessedness and reward, that is in the strongest way possible a grant of life everlasting. Passing down to David and the Psalms, we find in them all the life of religion—the desire and enjoyment of God Himself, without which there is no religion—and this necessarily implies immortal life. And all this the Psalmist found in *the Law*. (See Psalm cxix.)”

We need hardly say that all this is just what we should have de-

sired to write ourselves. Let us remark—(1.) It is plainly immortality *as such* that is here treated of. To 'live' and 'die' mean to 'be' and 'cease to be.' (2.) It is allowed that, by the fall, man lost immortality. For by that he forfeited life, *i.e.* the immortal life spoken of throughout. (3.) The fact that "God still designed man for immortal life" must have reference to a *gracious* design—both from what has been said of the life lost by man, and because all the evidence given for the statement refers to gracious Divine dealing. It was thus that He dealt with our first parents. (4.) "All God's intercourse with man, from that time, was a proof of man's immortality." But this refers only to gracious intercourse, and can therefore prove nothing but a gracious design of immortality. Besides, all the cases given are purely of such intercourse; Abel, Enoch ("a living proof that *immortal life* was the portion of *God's people*"), Abraham, in whose case we see God "*willing that His people should live for ever.*" (5.) The remaining references are of the same character. It was natural, indeed, for one who believed in unconditional immortality to speak of the "proof of *man's* immortality." But of that no evidence is even hinted at *except* God's *gracious provision* for His *own people*. So when he speaks of "God's dealings with men" as "about the communication of immortal life," he evidently means gracious dealings as conveying something which did not belong to the human race indiscriminately.

The reflections of one still more eminent on the consequences of the Fall, may be seen in *Paradise Lost* (x. 770-844); where Adam is made to balance the thoughts that "all of him cannot die;" the question being decided by the Divine announcement (xi. 57-66.)

"I, at first, with two fair gifts  
Created him endowed—with happiness  
And immortality: that fondly lost,  
This other served but to eternize woe;  
Till I provided death." . . .

## CHAPTER III.

IMMORTALITY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT—MISCELLANEOUS  
PASSAGES.

WE commence with the very distinct statement of our Lord to the Sadducees, in reply to their captious question as to the conjugal relationship in the world to come:—“They which shall be counted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; *neither can they die any more*; for they are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.” (Luke xx. 35, 36.) Now who can say in regard to these words, as is so freely said of similar words elsewhere, that this ‘dying no more’ is a purely spiritual matter—referring to the holy and happy, as contrasted with the sinful and miserable, aspect of endless existence? Who can deny that language like this, employed for the confutation of Sadducees, points to an actual and endless continuance of being, that is to say, immortality for the righteous, in opposition to the Sadducean belief of the indiscriminate extinction of human existence, body and soul alike, at death? What, then, becomes of those who do *not* share in the happy lot of these children of God? Is it equally true of *them*, “Neither can *they* die any

more?" Is that, in short, the natural birthright, and inalienable possession of every child of Adam, which our Lord so emphatically represents as the peculiar property of the children of God?

If the answer be that the 'dying no more' refers only to the immortal *bodies* of the saints—then, we ask, Do you not equally believe in the immortal bodies of the *lost*? Believing, in short, as it seems you must, that this language refers to an *unbroken existence* in the full sense of the term, how can you regard our Lord's statement as meaning less than that immortality is a thing peculiar to the righteous? And how, with such a statement in view, can you feel at liberty to teach men that the simple fact of their having been born into this world involves the certainty of their living for ever in the next?

The view thus naturally suggested by these words is confirmed by the meaning which our Lord attaches to the declaration, "I am the God of Abraham," &c. For from this it follows, as He teaches, that the patriarchs are still numbered not as among the dead but the living—all being alive in relation to Him who is their God. He thus plainly speaks of *life* in the sense of *existence*—and yet, of course, an existence so conditioned as to involve all that is truly blessed.<sup>1</sup>

We now turn to what may be regarded as the most direct statement on our subject in the Apostolic writings:

<sup>1</sup> See Note at the end of the chapter on the Rev. J. H. Hinton's view of this passage.



"Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 10.)

Now it is surely a mistake to draw any argument for the natural immortality of man from these words. For it is plain that, putting life and immortality on precisely the same footing, the Apostle speaks of them not as ordinary, natural endowments of humanity, but as special Christian blessings—blessings which, though now *revealed* by the gospel, *originated* in "the purpose and grace of God which was given us in Christ Jesus;"—blessings, in short, springing not from a general *creative*, but a special *redemptive* purpose of God.<sup>2</sup> And this should be enough to settle the whole question, whether immortality comes to us simply in virtue of our creation, or specially by redemption.

And what, then, is the thing at last revealed?—"He hath abolished death." But in whose favour is it that death is abolished? In favour of those whose whole state, here or hereafter, is represented by this very word 'death'?—those who in being raised up *from* the first death are only raised *to* the 'second'?—those, in a word, as regards whom resurrection and immortality awake no idea of blessing at all, but only of curse unmitigated and endless? Let any one candidly answer—all algebraic criticism apart—whether such can be any part of the boon connected with our Saviour's having abolished death. And if it cannot be, then where are the

<sup>2</sup> This view receives additional force from the idiom in the original, according to which the two participles without the article give a causal rather than a merely declarative sense.

unsaved in regard to that which has been brought to light?

Again—if Christ has abolished death, that surely refers to its entire range and dominion, as to body and soul alike. He has abolished the death which is the opposite, at some point or other, of all that is involved in ‘life and immortality.’ But how has He in every sense done this, unless it was the fact that in every sense death had obtained dominion and needed to be abolished? What the dominion and what the abolition are may thus be better understood.

“*And hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*” But what is *life*? Has it now come to signify existence only—with its capacity of being filled up, as the case may be, with happiness or misery everlasting? That life which we are continually hearing of as the very synonym of blessedness—has it become at length, in regard to myriads of souls, nothing but the occasion for wretchedness? That, in short, which has been held by our opponents, equally with ourselves, to be the very opposite of the whole state of the unregenerate, present or eternal,—is that now the prime element of *their* condition also? For, unless *life* be thus regarded, what ground can there be for so regarding *immortality*? If the lost have no share in the *one*, what share can they have in the *other* of the two benefits which have equally been brought to light through the gospel?

What, then, is ‘life’? Our Lord Himself and His Apostles will answer.—“He that believeth on Him that

sent me is passed from death unto life;" "The Bread of God is He that giveth life unto the world;" "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;" "I am come that they might have life;" "He that hath the Son hath life;" "Christ who is our life shall appear." Thus does man recover that 'life of God' from which he was 'alienated.' So much for the 'life;' and wherever it comes, there comes 'immortality' with it. It is true that the original word does not answer in its mere syllables to the word 'immortality.' But the sense is unquestionably the same. For both the word here used, as well as its kindred adjective, distinctly expresses the idea of 'incorruptible,' in the sense of 'indestructible,' or 'not capable of being brought to an end.'<sup>3</sup> And thus it would appear that only with the *true* life does there come *immortality*. So contrary to the Apostle's statement is the theory of an endless life in death, or an endless death in life. For no one surely will affirm that the 'immortality' is for men as such, saved and unsaved alike—while the 'life' is for the saved only. And yet, strange as it may seem, it is something very like this that really appears to be assumed.

What shadow of a reason remains, then, for affirming that the life and immortality spoken of are, jointly or separately, natural endowments of man, instead of special bestowments of grace? Is there in the entire

<sup>3</sup> The places where these words occur in the New Testament are the following: 'Aφθαρσία, Rom. ii. 7; 1 Cor. xv. 42-50, 53, 54; 2 Tim. i. 10. Even in Eph. vi. 24 there is no reason for departing from the ordinary meaning, 'imperishable'—"Aφθαρτος, Rom. i. 23; 1 Cor. ix. 25; xv. 52; 1 Tim. i. 17; 1 Peter i. 4, 23; iii. 4.

passage, either expressed or implied, any reference to natural endowments at all?—any reference to anything but the provisions of grace? Whether was it the business of the gospel to bring to light what was obscure as to the duration of human existence in general, or to unfold the special deliverance from sin and ruin as undertaken by grace? Is it blessing and curse, or blessing only, that is really set before us as the object and substance of the Christian revelation? And in what sense would life and immortality be a blessing to the lost? And thus we are brought back to the question, For whom are these designed? Be it so that there was a veil of the very thickest hanging over the future, and that the gospel, by its revelation of life and immortality, has rent that veil—how can that prove the natural, or let us say, the continued, and unconditional, immortality of man? It is immortality *for* man that the gospel as the mouth of the eternal thought has disclosed. Now this being so, it is very evident that man is a being fitted *for* immortality. But *the* immortality *of* man is another thing altogether. And however strangely the two thoughts have been confounded, and the second of them thrust *upon* our text, it seems all the while extremely plain that the former only, or the immortality *provided for* us in Christ, has any place in the text. As well plead from this passage, that 'life' in the Scriptural sense is man's by nature as plead that 'immortality' is.

Coming now to the important statement in Rom. ii.

7, What, we ask, does the Apostle mean when he speaks of a certain class of persons as having 'eternal life' for their reward—namely, "those who by patient continuance in well-doing *seek for* glory, honour, and immortality," or, which amounts to the same, 'indestructibility,' 'incorruptibility?' Does this consist with the idea of a natural immortality as the common destiny of all men, whatever the course pursued by them now? Why, in short, hold forth the advantage of *seeking for* immortality, if it is to be ours whether sought or not? Besides which, let it be observed that, while the Blessed God had just been spoken of as 'incorruptible,' man had been characterised as 'corruptible' (i. 23). Should not this help us, if help were needed, to a correspondent understanding of 'incorruptibility' in this place? And does it not all tend to the same conclusion, that, in a passage where every element had been heaped together that could add awfulness to the picture, it is the *life* only that is spoken of as *everlasting*—leaving us to conclude, in accordance with so many other lessons, that the "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish," in store for the evil-doer, are the appointed means of his actual destruction, as of one *not attaining to immortality?*

Proceeding to the fifth chapter of the same Epistle, do we find any reason for abandoning what we took as the direct meaning of the original sentence of death when viewed simply by Old Testament light? If the

Hebrew law-giver left us so far short of the goal of an unconditional human immortality, does the Christian Apostle seem to have enjoyed a light which made either the road or the end plainer to him? "Death," says he, "came by sin." But what kind of death? *Eternal* death?—meaning by that an endless life in a state of misery—is that the idea? Hardly, when we consider how plainly he here speaks of death as that notorious thing which the human eye could see, and to which age after age had borne unbroken witness: "And so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Now, without needlessly entering into the Apostle's argument, we may yet ask with all confidence, Does Paul, in thus speaking of death, really go beyond the simple, natural sense of the words, "In the day thou eatest thereof dying thou shalt die"? That is to say, does he, by one single expression or implication, in the least degree supplement, in regard to any proper human immortality, what may have been left unrevealed in the primeval threatening? Again—"If by the offence of one the many died," does that teach the doctrine of an unhappy life in a state of everlasting death? Or, "If by one man's offence death reigned by one"? Or, when 'death' without a qualification is so expressly contrasted with the 'life' which is qualified as 'eternal,' does that point to the conclusion for which we are pleading, or to the one which is reckoned as alone orthodox and safe?

Nor let us leave this passage, without considering how far the ordinary view really harmonizes with the

Apostle's comparison of the reign of sin with that of grace. Take, for example, the 17th verse: "If by one man's offence death reigned by one, *much more* they which receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Now, if we suppose the reign of sin through Adam to prevail over men to the extent of temporal death to all, and of evil very dreadful indeed, but still not interminable to any, then we can understand how the eternal life which comes through Christ should impart to that side a glorious 'much more.' For the good involved in such life must infinitely transcend any amount of the sin and suffering which are not eternal. But, if the sin which comes through Adam continues to run its course as an everlasting evil, followed by everlasting suffering in the case of countless millions of the human family, then what room is left for that 'much more' which forms the very crown of glory on the head of the Second Adam? So, in regard to the 'much more' of the 15th verse, the same question suggests itself. For if it be true that, by occasion of the offence of one, the many be dead—that is, all alike in the temporal sense, and the unsaved in the sense of an inevitable doom to endless woe—then it is hard indeed to see the force of the comparison, "*Much more* the grace of God hath abounded unto the many;" or, "Where sin abounded, grace did superabound." For how could the Apostle have so glowingly celebrated this superabundance of grace if he had seen, on the other side, as rising up before him that measureless mountain of eternal evil,

and as spreading out under him that fathomless ocean of eternal woe, which all the unpardoned sin of all generations of men is supposed to have drawn together? What abatement of the difficulty is it to say that probably, or at least for aught that we know, the saved will finally outnumber the lost? Be it so. Still *there* stands the mountain of evil, and *there* boils the ocean of woe, each of them unmitigated. Could any one, then, in the face of all this have declared, without a certain tinge of falseness either in his reasoning or his rhetoric, that grace and life had so completely overshadowed sin and death? Yes, and without once suggesting that possibility or probability of the numerical kind, which after all would only somewhat lessen a quantity which, diminish it as you will, can never become less than infinite. What, in short, could have inspired Paul with the sublime thought of the superabounding of grace, but just the assurance that, while sin had reigned unto *death*, grace was now reigning unto LIFE ETERNAL? For when was the thought ever absent from his mind, that "the wages of sin is *death*, but the gift of God ETERNAL LIFE, through Jesus Christ our Lord"?

Once more, we have the statement—"The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: *but* he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii. 17.) Mark the contrast to the evanescence of earthly things as thus drawn by an Apostle, and compare with it the other contrast which runs in such terms as these—'*But* the soul of man is immortal, and can never pass away.'



Is it possible, we ask, to adopt both these views at once? In a word, can we imagine the Apostle as having set up *his* contrast between the godly man and the perishing world, if yet he had believed that *all* men are alike *imperishable*? It will be hard, surely, in this case to find refuge in the idea that *permanence* itself is not here referred to, but *character* only. For it is precisely that which is referred to, if language could express, or the connection demand it. *Permanence*, in short, is *the thing asserted*, while *character* is only *implied*;—a very different matter from the converse method so strangely contended for; as if the *happiness* was the thing *expressed* in all the Scripture statements of immortality—the *permanence* being simply assumed as the attribute of all immortals! The Scripture method, in fact, is to state the *permanence*, and leave it to be understood that, where God makes a creature to share in His eternity, He makes the same to share in His blessedness also. If, in the present case, anything be still wanting to justify our conclusion, we find it in the strictly parallel comparison as drawn by another Apostle, when he sets up the *incorruptible* seed (*i.e.*, the living and *abiding* word) in contrast with the *corruptible*; and again, “the word which *abideth* for ever,” in contrast with the withering grass and the fading flower. (1 Peter i. 23–25.)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Hinton objects to the view that the contrast in 1 John ii. 17 lies betwixt the *world* as evanescent, and the *godly man* as enduring—maintaining that the points contrasted are the *evanescent satisfaction* afforded by the one, and the *enduring satisfaction* enjoyed by the other.

So much for the direct evidence as furnished by these passages against the belief of an inherent immortality. And there is an indirect evidence of great weight to the same effect. We all know the natural, let us say the unavoidable, style of those who, believing in the ordinary doctrine, are led to address their fellow-man as one born for eternity, urging upon him the interests of his 'never dying soul.' Now is this the style in which we find our Lord and His apostles speaking of men, and to men? Is there, in fact, one sentence in all their sayings or writings declaring the immortality of man as such? —one appeal to man as possessed of an 'immortal soul,' or as a creature destined to live for ever? Do we find the wicked told that the eternity belonging to them, as human beings, is to be a wretched one; or the righteous that theirs, *in the same view*, is to be a blessed one? In a word, do we find a trace of the doctrine that, in *addition to a common immortality*, there shall be evil to the one, and good to the other? Observe, the question is not whether in one or two places there seems any colour for the assumption that the wicked are threatened with a miserable eternity. It is, whether, apart from this, there is any appearance of immortality about them, as the prerequisite of their endless woe. It is freely granted, of course, that their immortality *might be* proved by the unequivocal description or assertion of

(J. H. HINTON, in *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 184, 223, 307.) Now this is certainly not the manner in which the Apostle puts it; and it is for the Bible-student to say whether he can accept of this view (however correct in itself) *to the exclusion* of the one which *the words express*.

such woe as in store for them. We are only remarking at present on the very notable want of any reference, direct or indirect, to a natural immortality, whether generally in regard to man as such, or specifically, in regard either to the righteous or the wicked. And then, when we remember all that is said of the 'losing of the soul,' and the 'perishing' of men; when we reflect that this word 'perish' is the one used to represent the entire doom of the entire mass of those who have sinned without law (Rom. ii. 12), that is to say, by far the greater portion of mankind hitherto; when we think how our Lord, while speaking so often of 'destruction' under various forms, speaks in one place of everlasting *punishment*, but without ever, as we shall find, giving utterance to the idea of everlasting *suffering*;—when we think of all this there seems little alternative left as to our belief in regard to human immortality. We can well understand, indeed, how all that has been, or may be urged, will be met with the sentiment that our doctrine is an extremely hard one for any devout Christian to receive—involving not a little of very bad feeling and very bad religion. And is it, we ask, so very hard to think that the blessed God, while permitting man to fall, should yet have arranged that neither his sin nor his sufferings should be endless—that is to say, that neither should God be eternally rebelled against by His own creatures, nor be under the necessity of eternally tormenting the rebels? Does it seem very strange to consider such a provision against eternal evil as having been involved in the original threatening of death? Is

it so very dreadful a thought that there is really no immortality for man in sin—no immortality for him at all, except in Christ? Or rather, is there not something both strange and dreadful in the thought, that not only has God chosen, in His Sovereignty, to withhold His salvation from the great mass of men hitherto, but has actually, by His bestowment of such a constitution on our race, renounced all right and power ever to destroy that moral agency which cannot be eternally continued, except at the cost of everlasting provocation to Himself, and everlasting suffering to the agent?

*Remarks on Rev. J. H. Hinton's view of Luke xx. 36, as given in his Tract, "Who shall live for ever?"*<sup>5</sup>

THIS is the passage that he chooses as the most direct proof of human immortality, contending that the words, "Neither shall they die any more," are spoken of all men indiscriminately. It may be observed that, while he always interprets our Lord's expressions 'everlasting life' and 'live for ever' as denoting a 'happy immortality,' he intends his own question, as given above, to allude simply to 'endless existence.' Let us notice how he meets the principal difficulties that stand in the way of such an interpretation.

(a) There is the expression, "*They that shall be counted worthy to obtain that world.*" This seems decisive against the view of *every one* obtaining it. Mr. Hinton pleads, however, that the expression 'counted worthy' (*καταξιῶσθαι*) is 'redundant.' On this we offer two remarks. (1) It is a hazardous thing to introduce in any case the plea of 'redundancy,' but especially where so much depends upon the word. It is very unlikely that such an expression means nothing; and few probably will feel much satisfaction in the rendering which the proposal yields. In two other cases the same redundancy, it is thought, occurs. One of these is Luke xxi. 36, "Watch and pray,

<sup>5</sup> See his "Athanasia," in *Works*, vol. iii. pp. 38-51.

that ye may *be counted worthy* to escape," &c. Now what right has any one to say that, character being ignored, only the *consequence* is here pointed at, the whole sense being '*That ye may escape*'? The second case is, "They rejoiced that they were *counted worthy* to suffer shame for His name." (Acts v. 41.) But who would refuse the disciples the deep satisfaction of being now *counted really worthy* of suffering for their Lord? In the only other case where the word occurs there can be no question about redundancy, as the sentence would be nothing without it—"That ye may *be counted worthy* of the kingdom of God." (2 Thess. i. 5.)

(2) There is an entire ignoring in our author's argument, of the vital element "they who"—"*They who* shall be counted worthy to obtain that world and the resurrection." And thus by the plea of redundancy, to get quit of *character*, and by overlooking this clear specification of *persons*, the sentiment, "*They who shall be counted worthy to enter upon*," is reduced to, "*When men enter* upon that world."

(b) In regard to the three expressions, "Equal to (or, on a par with) the angels;" "Children of God;" "Children of the resurrection"—they only mean, it is argued, 'deathless as the angels;' 'deathless as God;' 'persons who have entered on the future life.' That is to say, our Lord's statement would amount to this—"When men enter on that world, and the resurrection (or 'future life'), they do not marry; for they can die no more—for they are deathless as the holy angels, deathless as God, 'persons who have entered on the future life.'"

(c) It has been generally considered that the title "The God of Abraham," &c., shows that the blessing referred to was peculiar to God's own people. But now we are told that that title "must have been used in a carnal sense, since it was used respecting the entire posterity of Abraham in this line." Now the question is not in what sense He was the God of the people, or the God of the Jeroboams and Ahabs, but the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob—who on their part showed plainly that they sought a country—and in regard to whom "God was not ashamed to be called *their* God." We must thus judge what weight is due to the view that the "covenant relation to Abraham was only incidentally in our Lord's contemplation;" and that "the whole design was to point out the relation of God to dead men."

(d) In regard to the general style of our Lord's argument, I remark that since the Pharisees denied *all* future life, it was enough if He proved *any*; and above all that of the fathers of the nation. This being done, He was well entitled to stop there. And thus when He says,

"All live to Him," or rather, "All with respect to Him are alive"—the 'all' rightly belongs to those of whom He has been speaking, 'all *of them*.' It would be very hazardous to argue that this sense would, according to New Testament usage, have required the article "*they* all." The same might be said of the sentence, "Ye are clean, but not *all*"—where 'all' does not mean 'all men,' but 'all *of you*.' In a word, the reasoning plainly requires the linking of the 'all' who are 'alive' to those who have the Lord for their God.

## CHAPTER IV.

EVERLASTING LIFE—ESPECIALLY IN THE GOSPEL OF  
JOHN.**Part I.—Everlasting Life.**

IF there be in the New Testament a word with more variety of meaning than another it is perhaps 'life.' It is easy, indeed, to speak of the 'natural,' 'literal,' 'simple,' as contrasted with the metaphorical sense of the word. But it is by no means so easy to show, in any given case, that precisely the meaning thus assumed, and no more, is the thing intended. This, however—it is important to remember, that life in the natural world means the exercise of the functions of an organized being—the cessation of that involving the death of the being with dissolution of the structure. As to how this life originally came into the human organism, our information is—"God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." And so of death: "Thou takest away their breath, they die." (Ps. civ. 29; *cf.* Job xxxiv. 14, 15.) Such is bodily life, and bodily death—neither of them little spoken of in the Bible; and each of them significant of something which is higher or deeper than itself.

Now such being life in its simplest form, a full and

perfect life must consist in the full and perfect exercise of the organic functions—everything short of this being decay or disease with its tendency towards death and disorganization. This full measure or action of life we are accustomed to regard as the perfection of health—of which we sometimes say, ‘This *is* life.’ That we have thus got far beyond the idea of mere existence is obvious.

Suppose now we apply the same idea to the soul. This also has got, if not an organism, something closely akin to it at least, in its wonderful system of faculties or capacities, intellectual, moral, spiritual. In the possession, or rather exercise, however partial, of such endowments, consists the *existence* of a human soul; or, according to the other term, its *life*—a term which will be readily accepted by those who hold that every soul has to live for ever. And yet we can see at once how far such a circumstance is from exhausting the whole idea of a soul’s life. For if health be to the body *its* life in the highest sense of the word as so applied, then will holiness, or moral resemblance to the living God, with whatever is involved in that, be in the same high sense the life of the soul. Then will the soul experience the bliss designed for it in the full exercise of its wonderful functions. For then will man know ‘the life of God’ in its perfection. Thus we can see how wide is the sweep of meaning embraced by the word ‘life,’ as ranging from the worm to the seraph, and, by a still wider interval, up to the living God;—or, as in our own case, commencing with natural life under the simplest



aspect ("our life is a vapour"), and from this reaching on to the high doctrine or experience, "He that hath the Son hath life," "To me to live is Christ." No wonder if, with such a field to traverse, the word be variously employed. Even in the Old Testament, as we have seen, there are indications of the high view of life; although the instances of this are rarer than might at first appear.<sup>1</sup>

As to New Testament usage, there is no room for question, either as to the variety of meaning or the elevation of thought connected with the word. And hence we cannot wonder if it be difficult to fix a 'plain,' 'literal,' sense of 'life' when presented to us in all its perfection, and with the additional element of everlasting continuance. Such being the case, we shall not plead for any single sense as *the* literal one of the word; since a figurative sense is both perfectly admissible, and in certain cases most likely to be the true one. 'Happiness,' indeed, we should object to as the highest figurative sense of life;—such a term falling far short of the condition signified. We should rather think of a state which, while including that, embraces at the same time something much higher and grander. As for example, when the Apostle says, "Now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord," it is surely something beyond happiness that his intensely spiritual mind is busy about. He is thinking, in short, of the full exercise of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *e.g.* Ps. cxix. 175 (let my soul live) with cxvi. 8, 9; xxx. 9; lxvi. 9. So if we take 'life' in Ps. xxx. 5, in the highest sense, it will be hard to say that anything can be 'better,' as in lxiii. 3.

all the principles of his Christian life, rather than about the enjoyment connected with the exercise.

Be it so, then, that 'everlasting life' *might be* figuratively used to express the everlasting 'perfection,' 'happiness,' 'bliss,' 'glory' of the redeemed, and nothing more; that is not a reason for saying that it *is* so used. The possibility leaves us far short of the proof. For how stands the case? It stands thus—that the *possession* of everlasting 'life,' in whatever sense we take it, certainly *includes* the *possession* of everlasting 'existence.' What, then, if the *giving* of the everlasting *life* by special grace includes the *similar giving* of the everlasting *existence*? Does the Scripture teach us this? We hold that it does, and notably in the Gospel of John. In other words, we hold that the Scripture denies everlasting *existence* to all to whom it denies everlasting *life*; or, which is the same, that it teaches the *bestowment* of everlasting *life* in such terms as to show that it means distinctly to affirm the *bestowment* of everlasting *existence*. This we shall endeavour to prove; and this will preclude the necessity of showing how much or how little, as to character and enjoyment, may in any case be signified by the mere expression 'life.' For that really is not our question. The question is whether the '*existence* for ever' in the lowest sense belongs to any to whom the 'life for ever' in the highest sense does not belong. And we maintain that it does not. In other words, man, as a fallen creature, attains to *immortality* in the ordinary sense, just as he attains to *everlasting life* in the scriptural sense.

Now there can be no doubt that the words 'everlasting life' would, in an ordinary way, be understood to signify what they sound, namely, a 'living everlastingly.' And it does seem a strange thing to affirm that *all* men are to *live* for ever, or everlastingly, but only *some* to have 'everlasting life,' according to the New Testament! But it would be stranger still if this were the view of Him who taught that immortality ("neither can they die any more") was the peculiar property of a class which He characterized. (Luke xx. 36.) That is to say, it would be extremely strange if—knowing that *all* should 'live everlastingly' in the ordinary sense—He had meant, in speaking of 'everlasting life,' to signify that only *some* should have it in *His* sense! Let us see whether there be any ground for attaching so very peculiar a meaning to our Lord's words as recorded by the disciple who knew Him best.

### Part II.—Gospel of John.

Take the first case presented to us—"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (iii. 14, 15.)\* Now if we take 'perish' in the unquestionably *natural, ordinary* sense of *coming to an end*, or ceasing to be, it will be very hard to avoid the

\* Whether the word *perish* properly belongs to v. 15 is of no consequence to our argument, as the occurrence of it in v. 16 serves the same purpose.

conclusion that 'everlasting life' is represented as the opposite of the extinction thus set forth as its only alternative. That is to say, there is no escape from perishing—no possessing of endless existence—except as we obtain the everlasting life spoken of. But then we are met with the assertion that 'perish' does not *here* mean 'cease to be.' *This* also is to be taken in a peculiar sense, and as pointing to the *misery* of a soul immortal and imperishable. And so 'everlasting life,' being the opposite of this, does not signify 'living for ever' in the ordinary sense; but it signifies the everlasting happiness of a soul which in any case has to *live for ever!* Some who have been long accustomed to this conclusion may perhaps be startled if they review the process by which it is reached. But this is not the place for examining this extraordinary view of 'perish.' Enough to remark now that it is a very different view which our Lord suggests to Nicodemus, when He illustrates His redemption of perishing souls by the healing of those perishing murmurers who were being "destroyed by serpents." Can we venture, then, on the grounds commonly alleged, to assume, as a new or very peculiar sense of 'perish,' one so foreign to its common acceptation—and that in the face of the direct reference to the dying Israelites? For, unless we can do this, we seem shut up to the conclusion that, in promising everlasting life to believers, our Lord promised them the only imperishable existence possible for man now.

But stop, we hear it said, there is at the end of the

chapter a comment on the Saviour's language which gives quite another view of the matter—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, *but the wrath of God abideth on him*;"—from which it is inferred that the true opposite of life is a state of endless *suffering* under the endurance of wrath. But how does that come? How does it appear that the soul which loses 'everlasting life' is, after all, a soul which 'lives everlastingly,' and therefore, through the wrath abiding on it, suffers everlastingly? Can there be no such thing as divine wrath abiding on a human soul, so as to take away all hope of everlasting life, without supposing that that soul is essentially immortal, and must therefore continue in the conscious experience of the wrath for ever? Why rather should not the wrath come upon the unbeliever in execution of the sentence of 'perishing,' and abide upon him, without shifting or lightening, till his doom be complete? Is not this, in fact, the only thing that can find place in the state of a creature sentenced to the *loss* of EVERLASTING LIFE—even if it were not so expressly declared that that creature was to *perish*? Or must we still suppose that there is some incongruity between a true 'perishing' and a true abiding of wrath? But where is it? Suppose the prodigal, while sullenly continuing in the far country, to send home the message, 'I perish with hunger,' and his father to reply—"Yes, and thou must perish; for, except thou return, my displeasure abides upon thee, and thou canst see life no more,"—what incongruity would there be between the

two elements of the condition thus represented? And much less is there room for anything of the kind in a case where the process of the 'perishing' may be so protracted, and the abiding of the wrath so peculiarly dreadful.

Take now another case in which the contrast, though not so direct betwixt everlasting life and perishing, is yet distinctly implied—"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." Is it not clear that our Lord's design in this is to contrast the two kinds of meat, and the two kinds of life sustained by them? The one *meat* is essentially perishing; the other alone is enduring and imperishable. And so the one *life* is essentially perishing; the other alone (shall we hesitate to say it?) is what the divine meat is—a thing that endures for ever.

Once more, we have the contrast between the two lots which alone are possible to us;—"I give unto them *eternal life*, and they shall never *perish*." (x. 28.) Does our Lord, then, instead of indicating by 'perish' a real extinction, mean to express a suffering which is to be inextinguishable?—thus allowing us to conclude that by 'eternal life' He means nothing but the happy form of an existence endless for all alike? In answer to this we only refer to that actual 'destroying' and 'perishing' of sheep which, throughout the passage, He has been holding up in illustration of that from which He saves *His* sheep. A true shepherd always tries to save his sheep from *perishing* and to procure for them *life*. The Good Shepherd does this very thing in a super-

lative degree. The one will expose his own life in order to save that of his sheep. The other actually gives up His life, that He may bestow upon us 'life eternal.' Does it seem from this, then, as if the word 'perish,' when contrasted with 'everlasting life,' were used in any very peculiar sense?

In connection with this instructive contrast we may allude to a similar one which we find in chap. xii. 25; "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall *keep* it unto life eternal;"—where the life which is called 'eternal' is represented as that which a man *keeps*, in contrast with what he *loses*.

So much for this special help to the understanding of our Lord's view of everlasting life. We may get further help of a similar kind by returning to the sixth chapter, where He follows out the contrast betwixt the two sorts of *bread* and of *life*. Mark, then, the subject is 'everlasting life' (vv. 40, 47, 54), and see how He handles it. He tells His hearers that "their fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and *died*;" but now there has come down that Bread "of which a man may eat, and *not die*." (49, 50.) This is extremely like a comparative view of mortality and immortality in the ordinary sense of the words—the one in spite of the manna, the other by means of the living Bread. The word 'died' is certainly the one commonly used to signify 'mortality;' while the expression 'shall not die' has as regularly been employed to denote 'immortality.' And

then, besides this negative expression, we have a positive one quite as exact immediately subjoined: "He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever." (v. 51.) And again, "Not as your fathers ate manna and died: he that eateth of this bread shall *live for ever*." (v. 58.)

What, then, do these words teach if not *everlasting duration* as belonging only to those who eat of the living Bread? The immortality of such will assuredly be all that is blessed. Still it is not (in this case at least) the *character* of the immortality that the words point to. That is an inference, and an unavoidable one, or rather an accompaniment well understood to be never absent from the Scriptural immortality. The one thing really announced is that, through Christ the living Bread, there comes to believers an endless duration which did not come by the manna—the clear understanding being that in no other way than through that Bread can such duration be theirs.

There is another passage in the same chapter (v. 57) which in a remarkable manner confirms what we are thus taught in regard to 'life' and 'life everlasting';—"As the *living* Father hath sent me, and I *live* by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall *live* by me." Now it is plain that the life thus spoken of embraces the very highest possible life, whether in the creature or the Creator. But it is equally plain that it includes the simplest also. It is life, in short, in the widest aspect, at once in God and in us. If any one can believe, indeed, that the Son has *His* life *existence* apart from the Father, and only



in the Father, then he may also believe that we too have our endless existence or immortality apart from the true Bread ; while through that we only enter upon the right and happy use of such existence. But if, on the other hand, the Son's *existence* as well as blessedness is *by the Father*, then how can we admit the divine parallel here presented, and yet resist the conviction that everlasting life, as *including existence*, comes to us only through the Son as the Bread of Life ?

Take another assertion of what we venture to call immortality ;—"Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (xi. 26.) This, like the other expressions, is plain, so long as we consider 'die' to denote a *definite event*. But if, on the other hand, we regard it as pointing to an indefinite and endless term of suffering—an endless life in death, as it is called—then how shall we combine the ideas represented by words like these—"He shall *never* be in a state of *endless* suffering,' 'He shall *never* spend a life in endless death ?'

There is still an important passage to be considered ; and we have reserved it for the close, on account of the objection to our view sometimes drawn from its context. "He that heareth my words, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath *everlasting life*." (v. 24.)

We go as usual to the context for light upon the language ; and there we read of the Father as raising up and *giving life* to the dead, and of the Son in like manner as *giving life* to whom He will. (v. 21.) Now the life thus imparted is a new thing ; in other words, it

is the fact of an existence communicated that is asserted. For there certainly is reference made, at the very least, to a bodily existence not possessed antecedently to the life-giving act. Such existence, like all other, will depend for its character upon the character of the raised.

To the same purpose, in regard to a sphere immensely higher but no less distinctly brought before us, we find our Lord declaring—"As the Father *hath life* in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to *have life* in Himself." (v. 26.) Here also is plainly involved the fact of *existence*—an actual divine existence, first in the Father then in the Son. No one of course dreams that it is existence only that is thus communicated. And just as false would it be to maintain that existence as such is not pointed at. For it *is* existence, and that none the less because of the essential purity and blessedness associated with it. And if our Lord thus speaks of *life*, with such distinct reference to the fact of existence—whether as, on the one hand, restored to the dead; or as on the other, necessarily belonging to the Father and communicated to the Son—can we safely overlook such considerations when we read of everlasting life as given to believers? Can we allow ourselves to think that these differ from others, not in respect to the existence itself which is made so prominent in the whole of the illustration, but only as regards its character and circumstances?

But here comes in the objection alluded to as drawn from v. 25, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live;"—the argument

being, that, as 'to be dead' does not mean to be without an existence, so 'to live' does not mean to get one; but 'dead' plainly means 'dead in sin,' and 'live' means to obtain the favour and love of God. Hence, as it is possible to be dead *now* while existing here—so it is possible to be dead *for ever*, while existing somewhere else.

This may be specious, but that is all. There can be two reasons for our being fitly called dead, and these may not only harmonize, but be inseparable. Thus a soul may truly be called 'dead' which wants the life of God. And, as far as mere time goes, such a state is as conceivable for an eternity as for a day. But then it may be that the soul thus dead is under *sentence of death* as well—that is to say, a sentence of losing its life in every sense—*existence* being the foremost of all. And surely, if you offer life to a man condemned to die, you offer him a real existence—nor that the less because of his having life at present. And you offer him by this something much better than the mere continuance of what he has. For that is only a convict life; but you offer him a life of liberty and comfort—and yet still an existence. And now if you thought fit to speak of the man while under the sentence as a *dead* man—having respect at once to the *character* of his present existence, the *certainty* of his doom, and the *shortness* of his term—you would be much surprised to find some one understanding you to mean that, as the criminal might be called 'dead' while alive in the prison, so he might be represented as still living for an indefinite period after having died on the scaffold;—in other

words, if he could be called 'dead' here, and yet have his existence, so he might be called dead anywhere, and equally continue to have it! Such a style of representation would, in ordinary matters, be counted impossible. And yet what better argument is it to maintain that an actual death, or end of being, is not to be thought of in regard to us, because of the sinner being spoken of as even now dead—whether the reference be to his present spiritual state, or his ultimate destiny as one who is "condemned already"? Thus the language under consideration furnishes no objection to our view of the gift of everlasting *life*, as involving the grant of everlasting *existence*. The only question is whether there be sufficient evidence for that judicial cutting off which we contend for as the penalty of sin and the doom of the unsaved. If so, then it is plainly competent to offer life, even in the view of existence, to those who are in possession of existence already. The principle is no other than we meet with at every step in the Old Testament. For in what sense is it said, "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live" (Amos v. 6), but this, that those addressed were doomed to a death inevitable except through repentance? "We be all dead men," might such, like the Egyptians, have exclaimed—there being one means only by which they could become living men again. So when the offer of life is made to those who are already obedient (see Lev. xviii. 5; Ezek. iii.; xviii.; xxxiii.), the idea plainly is that those living now shall still live—and that with a decided accession to the blessing enjoyed by them already.

We need not, after this, say much on the similar objection as drawn from the words, "He is passed from death unto life." It may be quite true that death under *one aspect* denotes a certain state of existence. And it may, at the same time, be equally true that such a state is the sure road to a real destruction.

It only remains that we refer to the opening word in our Lord's prayer—"Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." (xvii. 2.)

For, according to the uniform teaching of this Gospel, man is perishing; his state is death—his end is death—the life that he has being no more a lasting thing than that of those who ate manna and died. But now there is One who has power over the whole of this dead and dying mass, to give eternal life to those who have been given to Him. "And this is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Thus, as man by the first tree of knowledge lost at once the knowledge of God and life everlasting, so by this new tree of knowledge he can recover them both at once. And thus does the Saviour, in bringing us back to God, give us that endless life which is only to be had in Him. Thus in Jesus we have not only all the good and glory of life, but the life itself—yes, all of it under every form—not only all that shall fill up the immortality, but the immortality itself to be filled up.

## SCRIPTURE OPPOSITES TO ETERNAL LIFE.

"ALL words," said Dr. Angus (*Three Letters on Future Punishment*), "are best known by their opposites. The common opposite of eternal life is simply condemnation and wrath." In proof of which he gives nine passages, as "a list of the Scripture opposites of eternal life." Even these passages, however, fail to make out his assertion; and the failure is not lessened when to his *nine* instances we add *eleven* more. For out of these *twenty* cases there are only *two* in which "the opposite is *simply* condemnation and wrath;" viz. Matt. xxv. 46 and Rom. ii. 7-9. In *two* more there *is* such an opposite, but not *simply*—there being added to it the other opposite of 'death' and 'not see life;' viz. John iii. 36; v. 24;—while in the remaining *sixteen* cases the 'opposite' is *simply* some word akin to 'death;' viz. in *six* cases 'perish;' in *five* 'death;' in *three* 'die' and 'have no life;' in *one* 'lose the life;' in *one* 'corruption.' The passages containing the 'opposites' are as follows (the expression 'eternal life' occurring in the same verse, or its context)—John iii. 15, 16; vi. 27, 50, 53; x. 28; xii. 25; xvii. 12; Acts xiii. 41; Rom. v. 21; vi. 16, 21, 23; Gal. vi. 8; 1 John iii. 14; v. 12. Thus, if the principle alleged be a correct one, it does important service to the cause which Dr. Angus opposes.

## CHAPTER V.

## LIFE AND DEATH.

THIS is a subject of such moment that, before proceeding further, we are constrained to return to it. For many seem to think that they can at once demolish all our arguments by a simple application of such statements as—"To be carnally minded is *death*; to be spiritually minded is *life* and peace;"—the inferences which they draw from them being these, (1) That neither does *life* refer to existence, nor *death* to the cessation of it. (2) That *life* signifies simply a right spiritual condition, and *death* a wrong one. (3) Which two conditions, extended into the next world, and there developed, become respectively everlasting life and everlasting death. Hence, it is maintained, all the statements in the New Testament as to the 'living,' the 'never dying,' the 'everlasting life' of believers have no reference at all to the continuance, but only the character of their being;—while the multiplied assertions and descriptions of the 'perishing,' 'destruction,' 'death' of the ungodly do not mean what such language invariably means elsewhere—in the Bible or out of it—but, instead of that, the endless evil and misery of souls that are imperishable.

A serious conflict indeed betwixt the Old Testament and the New in their employment of the same language—yes, betwixt the New and everything else, not excepting itself! Let us see what ground there is for so remarkable a procedure.

It is extremely plain, then, as we have already seen, that 'life' in the New Testament is used to signify more than mere existence, and 'death' more than the loss of that. But does it follow that permanency of existence forms *no part* of the gift of 'everlasting life,' and the want of such permanency *no part* of what is meant by 'death'? For this, however overlooked, is the only pertinent question here. 'Life' may be ever so often used to express something over and above existence, and 'death' may be used to express the bad spiritual state of persons regarded as still existing; and yet possibly the 'life' only may involve an existence which is to be endless—and the 'death,' while used in one view as descriptive of the condition of existing persons, may be utterly incompatible with the idea of their existence being permanent. Just as we can say of any one that he is dead to all that is good, or even that he is a dead man, without at all intending to signify that death is a *form* of existence. We call him by a certain well known use of language 'dead,' without meaning that he is to continue so always, or perhaps for another day.

After what was said in the last chapter of the life of the body and soul respectively, we now ask more particularly in what the latter consists.

We answer (1) That man, as made in the divine



image, got, simultaneously with his bodily life, another life altogether different, but admirably harmonious. He was thus endowed with the capacity for knowing and loving his God. And not with the mere capacity—which unemployed would have made him a rebel from the outset; but with the actually knowing mind and loving heart. This was the image of God; this was life indeed. And an essential part of this life is the immortality bound up with it. For it was the life of God that was communicated, and that must be an everlasting thing. He is the living God; and the creature that wears His likeness, enjoys, in so doing, an existence which is deathless. Thus the life of man was designed to consist in an endless relationship to God, as His obedient, happy creature. And what shadow of reason have we for the thought that an endless existence ever became man's in any other way than this? Thus is the endlessness one essential element in the life—which, without that, would not be "the life of God." Hence with the loss of the image comes the loss of the endless life. Such, we maintain, is the unvarying doctrine of Scripture in regard to man and his destiny. And in the light of this we explain the passages adduced against us.

Take the most prominent of these. "To be spiritually minded is *life* and peace." Now, to mind the things which the Spirit of God minds is plainly to have the mind of God; and that is to have the image of God, the life of God. And if for *character*, then surely for *continuance*. That is to say, an endless exist-

ence is essentially bound up with the life of God in the soul.

So we can understand our Lord when He says, "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God." Nothing can be wider of the mark than to infer from this, as is often done, that eternal life differs from its opposite in character only, not in continuance. For if such life consists in the *knowing* of God, so does the true knowing consist in the true *loving*. (1 Cor. viii. 3; 1 John iv. 7, 8.) Hence the life really lies in having the image of God, whether as to its moral element of purity, or its natural element of permanence. That is to say, the character alone involves the continuance.

Or take the words, "Being made free from sin . . . ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life," (Rom. vi. 22.) Holiness is thus a fruit of the new birth. But holiness is the very image of God—a character of which one constituent (or, which amounts to the same, one essential concomitant) is endless duration. Hence, the fruit being holiness, the end of that is *everlasting life*.

Again, we are told that "God by His divine power has given" to His children "all things that pertain to life and godliness." (2 Pet. i. 3.) Now surely if one of the things connected with life be *godliness*—or allowing more than the words express, even that life *is* godliness—yet it is just as clear that the life as such involves the element of permanence also. For the persons thus blessed with "life and godliness" have been already "made partakers of a divine nature;" and if anything

can ensure endlessness, it is certainly that. But shall we venture equally to believe that, without one trace of such a nature in its purity, without one spark of life or godliness, we yet (and that simply as human beings) are essentially partakers of the same divine nature in no lower an attribute than its very eternity? Is it easy to believe that, after losing this nature in everything that could make us morally like to God, we retain it in that only which must make us eternally unlike; thus uniting in our corrupt and wretched being the contradiction of an everlasting likeness and an everlasting contrariety? And yet such is the necessary belief of those who plead that the unrenewed man in the coming world has lost the divine image in all but an actual faculty of thought, and an extinct capacity for goodness, as combined with an endless existence! It can be little wondered at if the revulsion from such a view has, on the one hand, led many to deny the loss of the divine image at all; and many, on the other, to maintain its universal restoration.

And to sum up this view of the case, we are assured that that birth, through which we regain the divine image, comes to us "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, the word of God, which liveth and endureth for ever." (1 Peter i. 23, 25.) Could words more distinctly teach that only the 'godly' is the 'endless'? All seed merely natural is perishable; and whatever springs from it is the same. The seed of the word, on the other hand, "liveth and abideth," like Him whose word it is. The life therefore that springs from that is the only life everlasting. Is not this the lesson of the

passage? And if to this we add the accompanying sentiment, "All flesh is as grass," and then compare the whole with the statement made to Nicodemus—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"—can we fail to perceive that at least one object of our Lord in these words was to intimate that all merely natural being is perishable, and that only spiritual life is immortal?

(2) If such now be the case—viewed from the *moral* point of view, or the relation between endless existence and the divine image in man—it is the same when regarded in that judicial aspect which arises from our relation to God as sinners redeemed and justified. For if redeemed by the blood of Christ, then it is from a death righteously due to us that we are redeemed. And if really redeemed from that, then immortality is secured to us. Thus "he that believeth *hath* everlasting life," having "passed from death unto life." Again, if we are "accepted in the Beloved," the divine favour is certainly ours. But in God's favour is life. So long therefore as the favour lasts will the life last also. And how can the favour have any shorter term than that name of THE BELOVED which supplies at once the channel for its conveyance, and the guarantee for its exercise? Thus so long as our standing ground before God consists of the alone merit of His Son, we have a ground and a plea from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added—a ground as solid, and a plea as valid, for an eternity as for a day. And thus we can see at once

that the gift of God to a believing soul can be nothing less than eternal life. For in having Christ, we have life, so far as the unending favour of the Most High is such. And—to return for a moment to the other aspect of the case—in having Christ, we have Him as the spring and power of a new life within us, a life which must be ours while He is ours. Thus as the merit of Christ ‘giving Himself for us’ is an endless thing, and as the abode of Christ living in us is endless—whoever *has* this Christ, as at once his “righteousness and sanctification,” has life indeed, and life eternal.

If such, then, be the truth in regard to *life*, it will be plain at once what is meant by *death*. For the one must form at each point an exact contrast to the other. Thus, if life *morally* regarded be a participation in the moral image of God—then the absence of this will constitute any one “dead in sin.” So, if the soul with such a life is immortal—then the soul that wants it will for the same reason want immortality. Again, if life under the other aspect consists in the favour of God, and in this view also stretches out into immortality—then will the death which arises from the absence of the favour involve in this respect also the want of the immortality.

All this seems plain. But there is an objection which must be noticed. For, after saying that “to be carnally minded is death,” the Apostle adds, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die;”—thus intimating, we are told, that, as the present ‘death’ is only the bad *state* of the carnally minded, so the threatened ‘dying’ must be a state of precisely the same character—a state in-

volving a *continuance*, and if so why not an *eternity*, of existence.

Now such an inference is surely the very opposite of correct. For even if we allow that the 'death' first spoken of is nothing but a bad moral state, it will only be the more clear that the 'dying' threatened as a retribution cannot be the same. A crime is one thing; its punishment is another. The one is a wrong thing forbidden; the other is a right thing inflicted.

Having thus seen that the permanence of the true life arises from its very nature, we can understand how life and everlasting life come to be so naturally interchanged in our Lord's discourses.<sup>1</sup> It seems, in short, that spiritual life is of necessity immortal. But this only makes it the more unlikely—to say nothing of the express statements on the subject—that spiritual death should be immortal also.

<sup>1</sup> As in Matt. xix. 16, 17; John v. 24, 39, 40; vi. 27, 33, 54, 57; x. 10, 28.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE LIVING GOD.

MARVELLOUS indeed is the slowness to believe that the *fact* of endless *existence* is anywhere in Scripture *asserted* of God's people, instead of being, as is constantly said, merely *assumed* of them in common with others. For surely it is not so strange that such a thing should be predicated of the people as of the God. And yet there is no truth in all the Bible brought forward with anything like the frequency of this one. For, in the first place, by each separate use of the word *Jehovah*—virtually equivalent to the I AM—that truth of truths is expressly announced. And then, besides the title itself, there is the frequent assertion that His *name* is Jehovah—with the never-forgotten object of His government, that men may “know that He is Jehovah.”

But this is only one form of the announcement. Another constantly recurring one is in regard to His *living*. Thus we need only refer to the expressions, ‘The Living God;’ ‘As God liveth;’ ‘As the Lord liveth;’ ‘As I live, saith the Lord.’ And then there are cases in which the ‘divine’ and the ‘human’ are brought into the closest contact;—“As the Lord liveth,

and thy soul liveth." Now what is this but an appeal to the simple fact of existence—existence literally, and nothing else, on the human side,—existence as literally, but with all that is of necessity involved, on the divine side? Again, we have the statement of existence, divine and human, in such solemn language as this—"As I live, saith the Lord, . . . he shall surely live." That is to say, as surely as Jehovah lives shall the repenting Israelite not be cut off, or lose his life, among the transgressors.<sup>1</sup>

Nor does the assertion of divine existence stop here. It is coupled again and again with the express mention of its endlessness—"Abraham called on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God" (Gen. xxi. 33);—"I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever" (Deut. xxxii. 40);—"The Eternal God is thy refuge" (xxxiii. 27);—"From everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Ps. xc. 2);—"Thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end" (Ps. cii. 27);—"Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God fainteth not?" (Isa. xl. 28);—"Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2);—"I honoured Him that liveth for ever" (Dan. iv. 34);—"He sware by Him that liveth for ever" (xii. 7).

To all which we have the most perfect parallels in the New Testament.

Thus, in regard to the simple fact of existence, we

<sup>1</sup> Connect with this such an application of the same language as that in Job xix. 25, "I know that my Redeemer *liveth*."



have that expressed at once in the most elementary and the most enlarged form. "Before Abraham was I am" (John viii. 58);—"He that cometh unto God must believe that He is" (Heb. xi. 6);—"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come" (Rev. i. 4, 8);—"O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be" (iv. 8; xvi. 5);—"O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come" (xi. 17). Then, even oftener than in the Old Testament, we have the expression *Living God*, and several assertions corresponding with it, such as, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19);—"I am the First and the Last, and the Living One" (Rev. i. 18);—"The First and the Last, which was dead and liveth" (ii. 8);—"Of whom it is witnessed that He liveth" (Heb. vii. 8).

And then as before, in addition to the expression 'live,' we have many distinct statements of endlessness. "I am alive for evermore" (Rev. i. 18);—"They worship Him that liveth for ever and ever" (iv. 10);—the last expression being exactly equivalent to the one in the preceding verse, "Which was, and is, and is to come." "He sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever" (x. 6; xv. 7).

Further, the God of the New Testament is still 'the Everlasting God' (*αἰώνιος*, Rom. xvi. 26);—"the Incorruptible God" (*ἀφθάρτος*, i. 23);—"the King Eternal and Immortal" (*τῶν αἰώνων*, and *ἀφθάρτος*, 1 Tim. i. 17);—"Who only hath immortality" (*ἀθανασία*, vi. 16).

Add to all this one remarkable view as presented to

us by the disciple who was honoured to record so much of his Lord's teaching in regard to everlasting life. "The life was manifested; . . . and we declare unto you the eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (1 John i. 2.) It is, speaking grammatically, the abstract for the concrete. Christ is called 'the Life,' as being at once the real life-haver and the real life-giver. He is called 'the eternal Life,' because, according to His own teaching, He, as God's Son, had in Himself an essential life, from everlasting to everlasting; and because, having this, He came for the giving to us an eternal life which was not ours. Our concern now is simply with the circumstance that the eternal life spoken of is no mere *mode* of everlasting existence—but *that existence itself* in all its grandeur. The marvel was that that should be incarnate. The result is that, in proportion to our capacity, it is *communicated to us*.

Thus, then, we are told of divine existence; and that, not as a thing *assumed* in connection with something else, but directly asserted and put forward by itself, as a truth of the utmost moment. The gods of the heathen were 'vanities.' (Acts xiv. 15.) They were to '*perish*.' (Jeremiah x. 15.) They were all 'nothing.' (1 Cor. viii. 4.) The God of salvation was the Living God—the Everlasting God—the true I AM. Such is the teaching. It was never meant, of course, by language like this, to assert a *mere* existence in God. The existence referred to, at once independent and everlasting, must needs be pure and blessed beyond

degree. Still it is the existence itself that is predicated, and set forth as the root of all besides. This, in a word, is the thing expressed; while the character of it is only implied.

And what tolerable reason can be given for so differently treating language altogether similar, when applied to us? If we are said to obtain, through Christ, 'life everlasting,' why should we not recognize in that a direct assertion of the gift of an endless existence—instead of constantly maintaining that it is *not* existence at all, but *only* a certain *mode* of it that is affirmed? Why follow in this our own case a method the very reverse of that which we must follow in the divine case—always afraid of admitting that such a common matter as 'everlasting *existence*' can be anywhere really asserted of us; when it is so clear that even that could never be represented as the gift and purchase of redeeming love, without there being associated with it all that is pure, and good, and glorious? For when we find such pains taken to ascribe life, and everlasting life or existence to God—can we not see the grandeur of the ascription of a similar life or existence to His children? And why should we be so eager to reject the application of the words in the sense which—with whatever other, is certainly a natural one—on the ground that, as endless existence belongs to all in common, it can only be the happy *mode* of it that is dignified with the name of 'everlasting *life*'? Belongs to all in common! And is it so clear that God communicates to all in common

that which is *made to be so descriptive* of Himself? Let us look into this matter for a moment.

Of all expressions, then, for the divine existence there is none equalling in fulness and grandeur the simple utterance, I AM THAT I AM.<sup>2</sup> Such was the revelation that He was pleased to give of His nature and character to Israel. It is the full expression of the title JEHOVAH. Nor will it be doubted that the great I AM thus declares Himself to be the BEING OF BEINGS—the one True Fountain of all being and of all blessedness. It has been said, but not too often, that all being is *in* God and *from* God—all life, power, wisdom, justice, love—all excellence of whatever kind, actual or possible. It has been said, too, and surely with truth, that all evil is but the want—the guilty want and opposite of the good that is in God. But that it comes from God, any more than that it resides in Him and belongs to Him, is a thought abhorrent to every devout mind. What, then, is evil, viewed in this clearest and strongest of lights, but an excrescence or disease in the body of creation—a rebellion in the moral world—an interruption to the harmony of the universe? It is not *of* God—not *according to* God. It has no connection with the true *being*, any more than with the true *blessedness*, which go to constitute the I AM. Is it easy, then, is it natural, is it honourable to God, to regard as permanent—as eternal—that which is at direct war with the first principle of all life, all crea-

<sup>2</sup> It will be understood that this grand expression would in more modern language stand thus—I AM WHAT I AM.

tion, all government—even the very nature of the I AM? Is it easy to suppose that THE ETERNAL has voluntarily made—and to eternity will voluntarily maintain—that which rather *is not* than *is*, when viewed in its relation to Himself? ‘Being’ and ‘blessedness,’ it seems, should go together—if so be that the Author and Fountain of the two is ONE. Whether is it easier, then, to regard sin with its consequent suffering as an everlasting condition of moral beings;—or as a blot to be expunged—a disease to be swept away—a rebellion to be extinguished?—easier, in a word, to regard *being* and *blessedness* as eternally *dissociated* in the case of countless myriads of rational creatures—or to regard the ‘being’ which is without blessedness as only for a time—permitted, indeed, in the mystery of God’s providence, as an interruption of harmony—but, according to the very necessity of His nature, calling for everlasting destruction from before His face? “HE ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY.” To whom, then, and to what should He communicate that glorious property of His nature?—To that which abhors Him and is abhorred by Him?—or to that which, by *His* grace and the creature’s choice, has been “made partaker of a divine nature”? This immortality which is so divine that the I AM alone HAS IT—is it so little divine that it may be—must be—by some necessity, shall we say fatality?—communicated to those in whom it can only perpetuate rebellion and wretchedness? That grand summary of the divine excellencies, I AM THAT I AM, seems to teach us a widely different lesson.

And now, in addition to all this, we have information as to the origin and character of the eternal 'life' in us, directly showing the analogy between that and the divine life. "Because I live, ye shall live also," says our Lord to His disciples. Now His life, as we are sure, is of necessity most blessed. And so therefore must be that which depends upon our union with Him. But this, however clear and certain, is not what He here expresses. The thing *asserted* in regard to Himself is *life* or *existence*, in contrast with death, dissolution, passing away. And the life which He thus *has*, He communicates. What less can we see, then, in His gracious engagement than this—that an *existence* like His own, in a blessedness and endlessness which are inseparable, becomes through Him the *life* of His members?

And still more expressly—"As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." (John vi. 57.) But can we doubt now the real meaning of 'Living Father'? Can we deny that 'living' denotes here, not so much the blessedness of an existence already assumed, as the *fact* of the existence itself—the blessedness being an unavoidable accompaniment? Or can we doubt in what sense the only begotten Son lives by the Father? Can we venture to say that not *existence* in the proper sense of the word, but only a certain *mode* of it under the aspect of blessedness, is the thing here indicated? For what else can be designed by the comparison thus drawn than where it is said, "As the

Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself" ? (John v. 26.) And if so, how else can we accept this assertion of our living by the Son than as a declaration of the way in which we also may have an endless as well as glorious existence ? Thus the Living One becomes our life. The Eternal Life that was manifested is the spring of an eternal life to us. And as He lives in no partial way, but so as to embrace in Himself the whole circle of all that is real in life, from its earliest breath to its utmost blessedness—so in the same way and sense do we come to live by Him. Thus, while *His* "goings have been from of old, from everlasting," He becomes to us "the Everlasting Father;" or, as the expression indicates, *The Father of Eternity*. (Isa. ix. 6.) And what can be meant by such language, as compared with the other statements on the subject, but to represent the Immanuel as the direct root of an everlasting being to us ? What remains for us now but to be grafted into Him as the Resurrection and the Life—thus escaping all the death that sin has brought, and winning that life which is in Him for evermore ? Such a being must be blessedness.

## CHAPTER VII.

## 'DESTROY,' 'PERISH' (ἀπόλλυμι) AS USED IN THE SEPTUAGINT.

IF the Jewish mind was familiar with any one thing from the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures, it was with the idea and fact of 'destruction.' To express this there had been employed, especially in the Greek version, a great variety of terms<sup>1</sup>—one of these being the vitally important word ἀπόλλυμι—the word employed by our Lord for expressing the awful truth of the perdition of the ungodly. It is surely of consequence, then, to know what that word had for so long signified to the Jews. And this, happily, is as easy as it is important. For they certainly understood the word precisely as the Greeks had done before them. With both alike 'destroy' meant to 'bring to an end,' and 'perish' to 'come to an end.' There is no question here about a future existence of the wicked. The destruction spoken of in the Old Testament refers generally, or rather always, to some external act as manifestly putting an end to their present life. It is still, of course, competent for us to

<sup>1</sup> E.g. ὀλλυμι, ἀπόλλυμι, ὀλοθρεύω, ἐξολοθρεύω, διαφθείρω, καταφθείρω, ἐξαλείφω, καταλείφω, ἀναλίσκω, ἀφανίζω, ἐκτρίβω, καθαίρω, καταβάλλω, καταλύω, κατασκάπτω.



suppose any continuance or resumption of life elsewhere, for which there may be the needful evidence. But of that there is no question in any of the statements now referred to. Enough that the life, as seen and spoken of, has been—and probably through violence—put a stop to. Thus, for example, the word is used to express the destruction of Sodom and its people—the destruction of Egypt's chariots and horsemen—the destruction of the Canaanites, whether by the divine Governor, or the human instrument;—the rebellious Israelites being threatened, in their turn, with a similar destruction. So we read of the edict of Ahasuerus to *destroy* the Jews, and of the Jews *destroying* their enemies instead. Again, we have Nebuchadnezzar's edict to *destroy* the wise men of Babylon—with the consequent danger of *perishing* on the part of Daniel and his fellows. To the same purpose, the crew of Jonah's ship, and the men of Nineveh, are alarmed at the prospect of *perishing*. So we are told that the thoughts, desires, hopes, remembrance of the wicked shall *perish*. And, once more—"The wicked shall *perish*, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." (Ps. xxxvii. 20.)

This last passage is peculiarly important as presenting to us with great exactness the Old Testament idea of 'perish,' and the use especially of the word ἀπόλλυμι in the Septuagint. For there is hardly a supposable help towards the defining and understanding of the sense which the context does not supply. Thus (1), as synonymous with 'perish' in v. 20, we have the equi-

valent expression *ἐξολοθρεύω* applied to the same party in vv. 9, 22, 28, 34, 38. Again (2), the same persons are to "be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb;" and be slain "by their own sword." (vv. 2, 15.) And (3), as a sufficient climax to all this, "The wicked *shall not be*; he passed away, and lo *he was not*; I sought him, but he could not be found" (vv. 10, 36)—the same expressions being used in similar connections in Pss. xlix. and xcii. (4) As the contrast to all which we have the *permanence* of the righteous expressed by "dwelling in the land," "inheriting the earth," "dwelling for evermore," "being preserved for ever," "their inheritance being for ever." (vv. 3, 9, 11, 18, 22, 27, 28, 29, 34.)

Now it is certainly a mistake to refer to a passage like this, as directly showing that there shall be a final and everlasting end of the wicked. For such statements are perfectly compatible with an after state, of the duration of which they give no hint. And it is a still greater mistake to refer, for the same purpose, to the statement, "Man that is in honour and understandeth not is like *the brutes that perish*." All this is a misapplication of the words. They teach nothing directly of the *future* of the wicked. For, so taken, they would prove too much. But they do teach the Scripture usage of a vitally important word. They teach that that word means 'coming to an end' in regard to the sphere and the life indicated by it.

Such, in exact accordance with unvarying Greek usage, had been the application of the word *ἀπόλλυμι* in

the Septuagint, as signifying 'destroy,' and 'perish,' besides its other very common sense of 'lose.'

In spite of all this, however, there is a strong disposition to make it appear that the word is also employed to denote not the 'bringing,' or 'coming to an end,' but the 'inflicting' or 'suffering of grievous trouble.' Thus in a few cases—and they are very few—it is applied to objects which, as not in a common way liable to destruction, are considered as of necessity subjected to quite another treatment. And this treatment is held to furnish an analogy to that of the wicked, as expressed by the same term in the New Testament. Or, to put it otherwise, if it can be made out that the word ἀπόλλυμι, as used by the Septuagint, signifies, in any connection whatever, to 'cause to suffer,' or 'afflict'—then that is held as justifying a similar application of it when employed of sinners by our Lord or His apostles, and that, throughout eternity. A very remarkable assumption indeed! Let us notice the cases commonly alleged in support of it.

Isa. xiv. 20. "Thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people." From this it is inferred that, as a land cannot be *destroyed* in the sense of *passing away*, but only in that of *suffering a severe devastation*, so the word *destroy*, when applied by our Lord to the human soul, must be similarly interpreted. Now surely we might find, amid all the multifarious instances of human destruction in the Old Testament, more suitable analogies to the destruction of a *soul* than in such a notice of the destruction of a *land*. Take the case, however, as ad-

duced—and what does it amount to? It is common enough, surely, in speaking of a land, to have in view its produce—as when we say that a man lives by his land. And why, then, may we not in this sense understand the complaint that the king of Babylon has destroyed his land, when he has, by some means or other, occasioned the destruction of those fruits of it which were the life of his people? For when it is urged that, in no way but by *grievously afflicting* it, did that tyrant destroy his land, the question at once arises—In what sense did he afflict it, but just by destroying its fruits? And thus we come, after all, to the proper sense of the word ‘destroy’—only by a very circuitous road, and a very unreasonable assumption of its having a certain peculiar sense, which it really has not.

Again, there is the passage with the frantic cry of the Egyptians in the hour of their country’s agony—“Knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?” (*ἀπόλωλεν*, Exod. x. 7.) From which it is argued that, as Egypt still exists, therefore the fact of *destruction* in our case can consist with the indefinite, or endless, continuance of any party said to be destroyed. But is it right or satisfactory to make use of excited language like this, as justifying a very peculiar interpretation of the word ‘destroy,’ in no less grave a matter than the sentence of the Judge of all upon a world of sinners? Is the word *ἀπόλλυμι*, when applied to human beings, so ambiguous as to require elucidation from the quarter thus appealed to? And suppose we accept the appeal—unreasonable as it is—what comes of it, but just as in

the previous case, that the precious fruits of the land had been in a great measure, not grievously afflicted, but actually destroyed? And thus, when the people ask the king if he was really unaware of a certain terrible fact, *this* was precisely the fact which they meant. In no other sense had Egypt been destroyed. But in this sense it was perishing indeed. The land was actually, whether as to river or field, ceasing to be the bountiful mother who was wont so liberally to supply her children with bread. And now that Jehovah had shown Himself as so dreadful an avenger—now that stroke was following upon stroke with such terrible and abiding effect—each destroying some new source of the nation's life—while yet Pharaoh seemed madly bent on provoking new judgments, till nothing should remain undestroyed in the land—what more natural than for the Egyptians to express their misery by the cry, 'Egypt perishes,' 'Egypt is destroyed'? It is not in cases like this that human tongues are supposed to use words with the very barest accuracy. And an earthly judge would certainly be surprised to find that a well-known expression in one of his most solemn decisions had had a very peculiar sense attached to it, *because* some imagined that the passage required that sense; and *because*, by a certain construction of the word in an old chronicle, it seemed as if it had something of that peculiar sense there—contrary to the well-understood application of it, not only when the decision was published, but also throughout the chronicle itself!

Once more, we find in Jer. xlviii. 8, the expression,

"The valley shall perish." It should suffice to remark that we have no reason to interpret the judgment thus denounced otherwise than in the previous cases. Or if this be thought inadequate here, then let us add that it is by no means unusual for valleys actually to perish, that is, to cease to be valleys, and pass away like other matters.

Here are two cases of another kind which have been adduced to prove that the word *ἀπόλλυμι* does not always mean, to 'put an end to.'

Eccles. vii. 7. "A gift *destroyeth* the heart," &c.; or as the verse stands in Septuagint—"Flattery circumventeth the wise, and destroyeth the heart of his generosity."

Jer. iv. 9. "The heart of the king shall *perish*." But why should the expressions here used not have their ordinary sense of 'causing to end,' and 'ceasing to be'? What is more natural than to speak of vice as destroying virtue in general, or generosity in particular—and that in the strict sense of the term? Or what more fit—where a king is threatened with the loss of hope, courage, and all royal feeling—than to say, "The heart of the king shall perish"?\*

And what better than any of these cases are the

\* Another assumed instance of a peculiar sense of *ἀπόλλυμι* in Septuagint is Jer. xxiii. 1, "Woe to the pastors that *destroy* the sheep," &c. "Must the sheep" (asks Dr. Angus) "be *annihilated*, before we can pronounce a curse on those that *destroy* them?" Answer: The shepherds spoken of were acting as wolves to the flock—bringing down upon it, through their unfaithfulness, nothing less than excision, by the constantly threatened "sword, famine, and pestilence." As to the future, there is nothing intimated. As to the present life, the 'destruction' does mean 'putting an end' to it.

following three from the Apocrypha, as given by Schleusner, New Testament Lexicon, in his extreme anxiety to make out that ἀπόλλυμι has among its meanings that of 'making wretched' (miserum reddo)?

"An unwise king destroyeth his people." (Ecclus. x. 3.)

"There is that, through shame, destroyeth his own soul." (xx. 22.)

"For wine has destroyed many." (xxxi. 30, or xxxiv. 25.)

But what is there in any of these cases to forward the proof wanted? As to the first, nothing is more certain than that kings, simply through foolishness, have achieved the literal destruction of their people. This is peculiarly true of Eastern despots—who, by their want of wisdom in relation to such matters as war, famine, pestilence, have as terribly destroyed their subjects as their worst enemy could have wished. Nor is the meaning of the passage any other than this, as appears when we take the whole—"An unwise king destroyeth his people, and the city shall be peopled through the understanding of the rulers."

Take the next case—"There is that destroyeth his soul (or life) through shame." And what is more certain than that many a man has brought upon himself not only great *trouble* (as the wish is to make out), but all the *destruction* "possible, just through that *shame* which would not let him do right? Have we forgotten the warning, "Whoso is ashamed of Me and of my words," &c.? Or need we recall the circumstance of the self-confident disciple doing, simply through shame, all that was wanted for the destroying of his soul?

In regard to the third case, one wonders still more how it could ever be thought needful to modify the sentiment conveyed by the language. For if it be notoriously true that "wine has made many wretched," it is as true that it has, in the most terrible way, *destroyed* many.

Other cases often referred to for the same purpose are these.

Prov. xxix. 18: "Where there is no vision the people *perish*." What this sentiment would mean is no question with us now; for the Hebrew, instead of 'perish,' says 'is unbridled;' while the Septuagint renders, 'A disobedient nation shall not have a teacher.'

Hosea iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Here the Septuagint does not employ any word for 'destroy;' while the Hebrew indicates nothing short of a real *cutting off*.

Hosea xiii. 9. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." Again, the Septuagint makes no use of ἀπόλλυμι. But however we may be inclined to explain 'destroy' here, as having another meaning than 'cut off,' the passage itself gives little countenance to such an idea. For the destruction intimated is nothing less than that which comes through the lion, leopard, and raging bear.

Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." The word used (ᾠλλυμι) is not equivalent to its important compound. And yet even here it would be hard to get quit of the idea of a literal destruction; especially after the parallel, "The turning away of the simple shall *slay* them."



## ON CERTAIN APPLICATIONS OF THE WORD

'ἀπόλλυμι'

It has been strangely argued that this word may be taken in the most indefinite sense, because in the Septuagint it is found standing for some Hebrew word of which the meaning is probably different. Thus in Numb. xxxii. 39, the Hebrew has "Machir dispossessed the Amorite," while Septuagint says 'destroyed.' And this is quoted in a paper read at the London Clerical Conference, as one of the cases which prove that "this verb is continually used in other senses than to annihilate, or put out of existence." But what if the '*dispossessing*' of the Amorite was literally 'putting him out of existence'? And that it was so we are expressly told in Deut. ii. 33, 34; iii. 3, 6, where the word is used three times in reference to the extermination of the same people. It simply follows that whatever the Hebrew *said* the Septuagint *meant* destroy in the fullest sense. So in Numb. xiv. 12, "I will smite them with the pestilence, and destroy (Heb. disinherit) them." The *sentiment* manifestly in such cases is altered, but of the sense in the Septuagint there can be no question.

The following cases, for any one who has sufficient interest in the matter, are as strong as any that could be quoted. But no one reflecting on the free character of the Septuagint version can with any fairness maintain that the word ἀπόλλυμι must be regarded as having all those meanings which the Hebrew words represented by it had. In such a case we have only to do with the fact that the translator chose for some reason or other so to render his original. His text may have differed from ours. Or he may have taken liberties in rendering it which we should not think of taking. But it would be quite as reasonable to maintain that the Hebrew word in question has the meaning of the Greek one, as the Greek one of the Hebrew. And, in fact, there is no important word in the Septuagint that could not be shown on the principle contended for to have many more meanings than any one ever thought that it had.

The instances alluded to are: Jer. xlvii. 4, "To spoil all the Philistines," in Septuagint "to destroy all the aliens." Ezek. xxxii. 12, "Spoil the pomp," Septuagint, "Destroy the pride." Isa. xliii. 28, "I have given Jacob to the curse," Septuagint, "To destroy Jacob." Jer. xiv. 21, "Do not disgrace (Septuagint, destroy) the throne," &c. Prov. xi. 23, "The expectation of the wicked is wrath" (Septuagint, shall perish). In Job xlii. 8, Septuagint gives as a free translation—"Except for him I would destroy you."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## 'Απλῡμι (DESTROY) IN THE GOSPELS.

OF all words this is the one most frequently used to express the doom of unbelieving, impenitent, unsaved souls; and it is equally employed with that view in its various senses and voices. Its senses are, to *destroy* (or bring to an end), and to *lose* (or cease to have). The other voices will, of course, present the ideas, to be destroyed, to be lost, and to perish (or cease to be).

We begin with the word in the sense of "destroy;" it being thus applied to the soul. "Fear Him who is able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28.) Does this important word, then, mean here what we are alleging? In order to answer the question with some satisfaction, let us see what it means in all the other passages of the Gospels where our version gives it as 'destroy.'

"Herod will seek the young child to *destroy* it." (Matt. ii. 13.)

"They consulted how to *destroy* Jesus." (Matt. xii. 14; Mark iii. 6; xi. 18; Luke xix. 47.)

"He will miserably *destroy* those wicked men." (Matt. xxi. 41; Mark xii. 29; Luke xx. 16.)

"He sent forth his armies, and *destroyed* those murderers." (Matt. xxii. 7.)

"To ask for Barabbas, and *destroy* Jesus." (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

"Art thou come to *destroy* us?" (Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34.)

"It hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to *destroy* him." (Mark ix. 22.)

"Is it lawful to save life, or to *destroy*?" (Luke vi. 9.)

"The Son of man is not come to *destroy* men's lives, but to save them." (Luke ix. 56.)

"The flood *destroyed* them all." (Luke xvii. 27.)

"It rained fire . . . and *destroyed* them all." (v. 29.)

"The thief cometh to . . . *destroy*." (John x. 10.)<sup>1</sup>

In which of all these cases, then, does *ἀπόλλυμι* mean 'destroy,' with any other idea than that of 'putting an end to'? In what other sense did Herod seek to destroy the child Jesus, or the Jews the man? What but this did the lord of the vineyard do to the wicked husbandmen, or the king to the murderers? Did not Jesus mean to signify that it was more in accordance with law to save life than to put an end to it—declaring at another time that He had come with the one object, and not the other? The flood and the fire alluded to did

<sup>1</sup> One of the strange questions sometimes asked of us is, Did Jesus mean to signify (John ii. 19) that the Jews were at liberty to *annihilate* His body when He said, "*Destroy* this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"? The answer is easy—(1) The word which He employs has nothing to do with *ἀπόλλυμι*. (2) Nothing less was really meant than that, though they should destroy, take to pieces, put an end to, the temple in question, He would set it up again.

surely enough put an end to the lives of the evil-doers. When the thief comes to kill and destroy, he means to put an end to the sheep. Nor did the evil spirit aim at less by casting the youth into the fire and the water. There is only one case, in fact, in which an objection seems fairly possible; and that is where the demoniac asks, "Art thou come to destroy us?" (See Mark i. 24; Luke iv. 34.) Now it is surely an excessive liberty with this very important and definite word to argue that it does not mean here what it means everywhere else, *because* of a case in which a like party intreats not to be tormented. (Matt. viii. 29; Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28.) For what right have we to say that 'destroy' in the one case means 'torment,' any more than we should have to say that 'torment,' though it were used as often in its own peculiar sense, meant in this one case 'destroy'?

But the two words, it is said, are interchanged. No—the two incidents are entirely distinct. The first two passages refer to the case of the demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum, the other three to that of the Gadarene demoniac (or, two demoniacs, as in Matthew). In connection with the one case, 'destroy' only is used; in connection with the other only 'torment.' Thus the terms are not interchanged. And hence the very utmost of the plea would be—Demons speak of being tormented, and demons speak of being destroyed; therefore 'destroyed' and 'tormented' are equivalent; since demons could not fear being destroyed in any other sense. To this I answer—(1) What authority have we

for such an assumption? For, whatever may be our private conviction as to the indestructibility of demons, are we prepared to say that a word indubitably meaning 'destroy' cannot have that meaning in a question relating to them—however confusedly or mistakenly asked? (2) What right have we to say that the question is put by demons at all, and not by the demoniac (or the two), *as it is expressly said to be*? That the demons had a share in the question is certain enough. But what that amounted to, who can tell? And because they had a part, shall we give them the whole, in spite of the positive statement just referred to? Rather let us be content to allow to them what is plainly imputed to them—"They besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine." And (3), Suppose we allow that the two separate questions are from the demons, what right has any one to assume that they are identical in sense—the 'destroying,' 'tormenting,' and 'sending to the abyss' (as has been said) "only expressing the same thought in three forms"?<sup>2</sup> For, granting all the premises, it would simply follow that the 'abyss' is the dreaded place, the 'torment' the dreaded process, and 'destroyed' the dreaded issue. Is it wonderful, then, if such a prospect should force from demons the exclamation ascribed to them? For the *place* would be a hateful prison—the process a long agony—and the *issue* galling alike to their malice and their pride.

Thus in all the cases in which ἀπόλλυμι means 'de-

<sup>2</sup> So Dr. ANGUS in *Three Letters on Future Punishment*.

stroy'—putting aside the one in question—it presents no trace of the sense 'grievously afflict,' or 'make miserable.' Much less does it lend the least colour to anything like the idea of a painful judicial action eternally endured by creatures essentially indestructible.

Is it not a very serious matter, then, to tamper with the sense of this expression when solemnly used by our Lord as distinctly descriptive of the Divine action<sup>3</sup> towards the impenitent, body and soul alike? "Fear not those that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. x. 28).<sup>4</sup> Only allow, on the other hand, that the word *ἀπόλλυμι*, as here used, means 'destroy' in the same sense as elsewhere, and then all doubt is removed as to our Lord's doctrine in regard to the soul.

But then, as is contended, such cannot be the meaning here—because, the soul being indestructible, the word which elsewhere means 'to put an end to' must have another meaning in this place. It must apply, in short, not to the soul itself, but to its well-being:—thus coming to mean not really 'destroy,' but 'disorganize,' 'distress,' 'torment'—till at last the entire

<sup>3</sup> We assume that the action is *Divine* as the only tolerable view. But, suppose any one to prefer the extraordinary idea of its being *Satanic*, that will not affect the meaning of the word.

<sup>4</sup> In Luke ix. 56 we read, 'The Son of man is not come to *destroy* men's lives, but to save them!' These words, though probably a later addition, are still very ancient, and therefore important as illustrating the usage of *ἀπόλλυμι*. Their meaning is still further defined by the contrast between the 'not destroy' here, and the 'consume' in v. 54.

sense turns out to be the inflicting of endless misery. The manifest answer to all this is—Why, then, not use some expression which would have distinctly signified as much, instead of *saying*, with another meaning, that God would *destroy* that which cannot be *destroyed*?

But this is not all that can be said *for* the natural, and *against* the alleged, meaning of ἀπόλλυμι. Both the context and the connection of ideas absolutely forbid any such liberty with the word, and oblige us by every rule of language and thought to take it here as elsewhere.

For (1) instead of any such tremendous discordance as would thus be implied between the human 'killing' and the Divine 'destroying,' there is the most simple and direct transition from the one to the other. "Fear not them that can kill the body only" is the appeal—thus painfully putting an end to that;—"but fear Him who is able to destroy both *soul* and *body* in hell"—thus putting an end far more dreadfully to these. The second idea is, in fact, a terrible climax to the first. And thus, instead of going off in another direction, it *includes all*, and more than all, that is involved in the other.

(2) It would be highly unreasonable to suppose that the 'destroying' of 'soul' is quite a different thing from the 'destroying' of 'body.' Nor, indeed, will this be contended for. Rather in this case will it be admitted that each is the same—namely, a grievous distressing, or tormenting. But on what ground can this be urged as to the body? The alleged reason for saying it of the soul is that *that* is indestructible, and therefore can

be spoken of as *destroyed* only in the very peculiar sense contended for;—that sense being sure for the same reason to suggest and commend itself to all honest hearers or readers. But this cannot be said of the *body*. The body *can be destroyed*. What reason, then, was left for using language in regard to it which furnished no climax to the ordinary 'killing,' and which, in fact, naturally taken, signified the very contrary to what was expressed?

Such is the character of the attempt to explain away the decisive word 'destroy' in this place. Nor does there appear (if the conclusion thus aimed at is to stand) any alternative but the idea of some—that, while God is indeed *able* to destroy both soul and body in hell, it is most certain that He never will! That is to say, physically He *can*, but morally He *cannot*—having distinctly bound Himself to the contrary! And such is the ground on which He is to be feared so much more than the mere killers of the body—namely, that, while they both *can* and do kill, He *can*, but *never does*, destroy! Convince any one of this, and then wonder not if you have also convinced him that, while God has *power* to cast into hell (as elsewhere said), He never does, and never will use it.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Hinton (*Works* iii. p. 217) gives a peculiar view of this passage. "It has (says he) no reference to the punishment of sin. God's being able to destroy both soul and body in hell concludes nothing as to the curse of the law." Again, "The whole verse is a warning addressed by Christ to timid disciples under circumstances of persecution" (p. 304). What, then, *is* the warning? What is *the thing* which it is said that God *can do*? And is it meant to signify in regard to that—whatever it be—that, though He *can*, He never *will*?



We now ask whether any better objection can be brought against us than this, that our doctrine is impossible;—'destruction' being a thing out of the question, as contrary at once to all right thought, and divine teaching? Even so do many argue that the Deity of our Lord is an impossibility. They cannot, in short, and will not, believe it. And thus when they read, "The Word was God," the plea is at hand, that an expression like this must be taken in a peculiar sense. Nor is it ever hard to find some such; since there is no word in any language but is at times used with a certain degree of liberty.<sup>6</sup> And so it fares with the grand truth of the Saviour's sacrifice for sin. Nothing can be allowed to prove it in the genuine sense of the terms employed to express it; *because* (as is urged) it is *impossible*. Thus does man treat Scripture truth; and ever will, so long as he can permit himself to speculate, when his only business is to submit.

If now asked whether, by all this, it is intended to teach '*annihilation*'—the answer is, of annihilation we know nothing as regards mind, any more than as regards matter. We only accept what the Scripture teaches of 'destroying';—as when it says that "Herod sought after the child to *destroy* it;" or, "The king sent and

<sup>6</sup> The parallel passage just referred to, Luke xii. 4, 5, has been very unfairly made use of in support of the ordinary doctrine. For it has been taken as teaching that God can, *after killing body and soul*, cast both of them into hell; thus showing that the *killing* here (and therefore the 'destroying' elsewhere) does not involve an *end*. Instead of which there is no hint of the killing of the soul before casting it into hell; but of the natural killing of the body only.

miserably destroyed those wicked husbandmen." Nor is it fair—considering the physical difficulty attaching to 'annihilation'—to substitute that word for 'destruction,' and then charge us with believing accordingly. 'Destruction' is the Scriptural word; why, then, not agree to abide by it? Have we any reason to dislike it? And more than this, the two ideas are far from being equivalent. A thing is 'destroyed' when its condition is so changed that it has ceased to be the organized object which it was before. But, knowing nothing about its proper substance, we cannot say that it has been *annihilated*. Besides which, the word 'destroy' leaves ample room for the period or process of dissolution, if it does not even suggest it; while 'annihilate' would suggest a view differing from the reality.

NOTE.—The following are instances of the attempt to find examples of the peculiar meaning attached to ἀπώλλυμι (destroy). Archbishop Tillotson, who is considered to have handled the subject (Ser. xxxv.) in a very thorough manner, thus dismisses this point—"Nothing is more common in most languages than by 'perishing' to express a person's being undone and made very miserable. As in that known passage in Tiberius, his letter to the Roman senate—"Let all the gods and goddesses destroy me worse than at this very time I feel myself to perish;"—in which saying the words 'destroy' and 'perish' are both of them used to express the miserable anguish and torment which at that time he felt in his mind, as Tacitus tells us at large."—We ask the following questions: (1) If "nothing is more common in most languages," why not give us several examples from the Greek, rather than a single one from the Latin? (2) Is it satisfactory to give passionate expressions like these as safe guides to the interpretation of language so dispassionate as the judicial utterances of our Lord in regard to the destroying of the soul? (3) Is it clear, after all, that the wretched emperor would have accepted of the sentiment which the English divine imputes to him? Is it not more probable that,

thorough Epicurean as he was in practice, he was Epicurean in principle also, and meant by 'destroy' and 'perish' just what the words meant—while shuddering of course, as such a man would certainly do, at the "anguish and torment" incidental to the destruction?

The following case is given by Dr. Angus to show that the word ἀπόλλυμι may be used by a Greek writer of those who still survive the destruction indicated. His reference is to Herodotus who, he says, "tells what the Getae believed became of men when they were 'destroyed,' and how they were supposed to go afterwards into the presence of one of their gods." To see the inadequacy of the argument, we need only refer to the case.

The circumstance alluded to (iv. 93) is simply this, that the Getae, every five years, sent a peculiar embassy to the god Zamolxis. Selecting an individual, they tossed him in the air, so that he might fall on the points of javelins—being regarded, in the case of his dying, as their messenger to the god, and being spoken of as *destroyed* or *perishing*. That is to say, the *body* of the man was destroyed, perished, came to an end—while the *spirit* survived and went on the embassy. And this they took as an evidence for immortality. A good proof of that, indeed (if a proof of anything)—so long as 'immortality' is taken simply to mean the soul's existence after the death of the body. And a proof also that Herodotus used the word ἀπόλλυμι in no other sense than we contend for. Let us add that in the same book (c. 68 and 69) he uses the word of 'putting to death,' just as in Matt. xii. 14.

The following are instances of the easy way in which our Lord's testimony in Matt. x. 28 is disposed of. *Bengel* says, "'Απόλλυμι, to destroy, to ruin. It is not said to *kill*: the soul is immortal." And to the same purpose *Stier*, "Die untödbarkeit oder unsalerblichkeit der Seele wird hier, wie in der ganzem Schrift, nicht als Dogma gelehrt, sondern als von selbst sich verstehend vorausgesetzt."

## CHAPTER IX.

## 'Απόλλυμι (LOSE) IN THE GOSPELS.

WE give again each case, proceeding from the simplest to those which are more complex, and coming to those that speak directly of the losing of the soul. Let it be observed, then, whether there is in the whole catalogue one case in which 'lose' does not mean to 'cease to have'—whatever other idea may be involved.

Matt. x. 42. "He shall in nowise lose his reward." So Mark ix. 41. [Here the idea differs from the one expressed in all the other cases only as '*fail* to have' differs from '*cease* to have.']

Luke xv. 4, 6, 8, 9, 24. "If he *lose* one sheep doth he not go after the *lost* till he find it?" "My sheep which was *lost*;"—"If she *lose* one piece;"—"My piece which I had *lost*;"—"My son was *lost*, and is found."

John vi. 12. "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be *lost*."

And then three striking cases in which the Saviour speaks of *not* losing souls—"That of all which He hath given me I should *lose* nothing" (vi. 39);—"Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is *lost*" (xvii. 12, where we see that *keeping* is the opposite of *losing*);—"Of them which thou hast given me I have

*lost* none." (xviii. 9.) Now, as to the meaning of *lose* in these cases, there can be no question. It must mean 'ceasing to possess.' Have we any right, then, to say that the meaning is entirely, yes infinitely different, when the same language is applied to a man in regard to his own soul—as different, in short, as 'ceasing to have' is from 'continuing to have in a state of endless misery'?

Matt. x. 39. "He that *findeth* his life shall *lose* it; and he that *loseth* his life for my sake shall *find* it." We observe here the opposite of 'lose' in the word 'find.'

Mark viii. 35. "Whosoever desires to *save* his life shall *lose* it; but whosoever shall *lose* his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall *save* it." It is superfluous to inquire whether 'life' here means more than natural life. For, however that may be, it is clear that 'lose' means to 'part with,' so as to *cease to have*. The same is true of

Luke xvii. 33. "Whosoever shall seek to *save* his life shall *lose* it; and whosoever shall *lose* his life shall *preserve* it" (*ζωονομήσει*, i.e. he that loses his life in one of the two ways alluded to shall gain it in the other).

John xii. 25. "He that loveth his life shall *lose* it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

We can see now the force of the expression, "*Lost* sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 6; xv. 24)—an expression already made familiar to Jewish ears by the language of the Old Testament. It means, of course, in all cases just what it means in the parable—namely,

the sheep which the shepherd has, for the time, ceased to have. It may be lost beyond hope of recovery or not. That has nothing to do with the sense of the word. Nor does the question of *destruction* come in here, as far as the mere word goes; for a sheep may be 'lost,' and not 'destroyed.' Hence the extreme weakness of the common questions: 'Was the lost sheep annihilated?' 'Were the asses of Kish annihilated?' No one ever thought that they were, and yet not the less did the owner *cease to have* them while they were lost. Think of David's lamb as out of his hands into the lion's mouth, and see in what sense it was lost to *him*. Viewed thus, we can well enter into the deep pathos of the divine lamentation, "My people have been *lost sheep*." And if a sheep be lost for ever, does the shepherd ever have it again? Or if friends, instead of having to sympathize with him in such a loss, should have to mourn over him as having lost his life—what, in that case, would 'lose' mean? Or, in the case of his losing his *soul*—what then?<sup>1</sup>

What further question now remains as to Matt. xviii. 11, and Luke xix. 10—"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"? The expression has come, of course, from the familiar and affecting one of the 'lost sheep;' and in the idea of being *thus* lost, all possible wretchedness is manifestly included. For what can be more awful than the fact of a soul getting out of

<sup>1</sup> Among the many unthoughtful questions that have been asked here is one, Is a guinea annihilated when it is lost? Certainly not; and yet as certainly it is out of the owner's hands. And, whether in other hands or not, it is lost to him.

the loving hands of God—whether into its own self-destroying ones, or into the power of the enemy spoken of as “a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”? And such is assuredly the idea expressed by ‘lost.’ It is the fact of *separation from God*, with all the evil and all the woe attaching to such a condition. Thus, in coming “to seek and save the lost,” the Son of man has come to bring back to God’s heart and hands those who were hopelessly estranged from Him. And what but such a restoration is the joy of the prodigal, as his ears ring with the voice, “This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was *lost*, and is found”? Thus do we see what an extreme of wretchedness pertains to the condition of the ‘lost,’ so soon as we take into an account what in such a case the *simple* ‘ceasing to have’ amounts to. We see too that any other mode of interpreting the figure must fail—both as overlooking the meaning of the word and the bearing of the illustration.

We come now to the most solemn application of the word ‘lose’ within the compass of Scripture:—“What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and *lose himself*, or be cast away?” (Luke ix. 25.) Is it possible, then, it may be asked, for a man to lose himself—actually to lose his very self? The Lord Jesus says that it is, and we believe Him. But can you venture, it will be said, to take words so peculiar as these in their strict literality? for His meaning, surely, must simply be that a man may lose all that is worth having about himself—so that, in such a maimed, disordered state, he would prefer, if he might, to lose rather than

keep his existence. Our Lord, I repeat, has said, that a man may 'lose himself;' nor can we find in the New Testament any other sense to the word 'lose' than the one for which we are pleading.

And as little, to save the meaning of 'lose,' dare we tamper with the word 'himself.' In no way but by supposing a highly figurative style to be employed can we maintain that the 'losing himself,' only means the losing of what is good, and necessary for his happiness. But our Lord's style in this case is *not figurative*. It is one thing, in short, when using the language of strong feeling, to throw out an expression of this kind, in support of something else which it is the object *directly* to put forward. For then the *feeling* and the *subject* explain the language. But to make a *direct declaration* of such a kind by itself is altogether another matter. For then there is nothing to explain the declaration except itself; and therefore there is no alternative but to take it as it stands.

Now all this is strongly confirmed by the parallel passage in Matthew and Mark, where, instead of the wider expression, 'lose himself,' it is simply, 'lose his own soul.' And it is not difficult to see how the latter expression gives less opportunity for figurative interpretation than even the former. But, before leaving the passage in Luke, it may be well to give a reason or two why the announcement there made *should* and *must* be taken in its simple, self-suggestive sense.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "To lose life is to be *deprived of it*, or *no longer to possess it*; and 'to lose the soul' (if it be of the soul that  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  should be here under-



(1) The word 'lose' has been twice used in the sentence immediately preceding, as the opposite of 'save,' and as unquestionably meaning 'cease to have,' in reference to life. Yes, and the present statement is made in direct continuation of that one, and is, in fact, so dependent upon it that to interpret differently the vital word 'lose' would introduce into the whole an element of hopeless and inexplicable confusion. (2) The 'losing' is fixed down to its proper and ordinary sense by the contrast with 'gaining.' For the supposed case is that of a man actually gaining, or *coming to have* the world, and losing, or *ceasing to have himself*. The contrast is absolute; the loss being such that the gain becomes *nothing*. On the other hand, suppose a man to lose his *well-being*, but not *himself*, it would be no way absurd to regard him as having a possible gain, because a possible mitigation of his calamity in the possession of the world. And (3) to the terrible expression (lose himself) there is added an equivalent which serves to confirm the sense otherwise arrived at. In our version that additional expression is, 'or be cast away.' But this certainly fails to convey the precise idea. The only sense of the word (*ζημιωθείς*) in the Greek Scriptures is that of *losing* or *suffering loss*.<sup>3</sup> Thus, "If any man's stood) must of necessity be a figure of speech, most probably regarded as denoting, not the cessation of its being; but the privation of its well-being" (J. H. HINTON, iii. p. 305). Does this amount to more than the *assertion* that the word 'lose' is inapplicable to 'soul,' in the sense in which the writer himself applies it to 'life'?

<sup>3</sup> There are cases in other authors where the word expresses *penalty*. But that is generally in the form of a *fine*, so that the idea of 'losing' still remains.

work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss"—the *loss* coming in the way of retribution (1 Cor. iii. 15);<sup>4</sup>—"For whom I have *suffered the loss* (ἐζημιώθην) of all things, and count them but dung, that I may *win* Christ" (Phil. iii. 8)—the same contrast being observed as in our passage between the *losing* and *gaining*.<sup>5</sup> How to find English, indeed, corresponding to ζημιωθείς, as occurring after ἀπολέσας ἑαυτὸν, without repeating in some form the word 'lose,' I do not know. This, however, is plain—with what a fearful decisiveness the natural sense of the expression first used is confirmed by the addition of the other. Nor can we avoid the impression that the new thought conveyed is that of *suffering* loss as a judicial infliction. If we knew an English word sufficiently akin to 'loss,' we might thus render the two expressions—"If he lose, or suffer the — of himself." <sup>6</sup>

Coming now to the parallel passage already referred to, we shall find it to present partly the same, and partly a new feature or two. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and *lose* (ζημιωθῇ) his own *soul*? or what shall a man give in exchange for his

<sup>4</sup> There is a striking connection between the passage under consideration, and the verse just quoted. The one supposes a man to gain the world and lose himself; the other supposes a builder to lose the entire fruit of his labour, and gain himself. All but himself is left behind in the fire.

<sup>5</sup> In the same way is the noun ζημία applied, and that in contrast with κέρδη (ev. 7, 8). Cf. Acts xxvii. 10, 21.

<sup>6</sup> The word ἀπολέσας in this passage is taken by some in the sense of 'destroy.' But this does not well suit the expressions in the context which present an analogy or contrast with 'lose.'

*soul?*" (Matt. xvi. 26; Mark viii. 36.) Here, as will be observed, the word which was appended in the other case to the expression 'lose himself' is now used with 'soul' to indicate the 'losing' of that. For that such is still the meaning is clear both from the sense of the word itself, and from the train of thought as connected with the previous verse of which the whole subject was that of 'saving and losing,' 'losing and finding.' What the distinction may be between these two terms for 'losing' we cannot say—farther than that the one here employed (as already hinted) is more directly expressive of 'penalty' or 'suffering loss'—being a more comprehensive term than ἀπώλλυμι, which of itself can refer only to the *fact* of 'losing.' This, however, is clear, that hard as it must ever be to show that ἀπώλλυμι does *not* signify *ceasing to have*, it would be as hard to show the same of ζημιόυμαι—hard to show that it only means being punished with loss *in*, but no loss *of*, that which is positively said to *be lost*.

And now, as before, this very simple conclusion is confirmed by the context—the whole case being distinctly one of *having* or *not having* the things in question. For (1) the supposition is of a man 'gaining,' or *coming to have* the world; and 'losing,' or *ceasing to have* his soul. Can it be that the use of the peculiar word for 'lose' (ζημιωθείς) indicates the judicial action in regard to him, for having preferred the world to his soul? (2) There is another circumstance which very strongly exhibits the whole matter as one of the *having* or *not having* of the soul; we mean the question, "Or

what shall a man give in exchange (*i.e.* in payment, or compensation) for his soul?” The man supposed has gained the world, and is on the point of losing his soul. What, then, has he amid all his treasures to offer in ransom for that soul, so that he may still keep and not lose it?

Thus, then, the awful fact of extinction, or utter destruction, is announced in the plainest terms—in the most solemn spirit—in the most judicial style. We may still, if we can, cry, ‘Impossible! Whatever be *said*, something else than this must be *meant*. I cannot believe it; my whole nature, human and Christian, revolts from it.’ Yes, we may say so. Still *there* stands the word of our Lord announcing it. Nor does there seem any way of escaping from the conclusion, except, on the one hand, by taking in an unknown sense the two words employed to signify ‘lose;’ or, on the other, by showing that ‘himself’ does not mean ‘himself,’ or ‘soul’ mean ‘soul,’ when used in connection with these words!

## CHAPTER X.

## 'Ἀπόλλυμαι (PERISH) IN THE GOSPELS.

WE come now to the same important word (as found in the middle and passive voice) with the sense of 'perish' or 'be destroyed.'

Let us take (*a*) the cases in which the reference is to a purely *natural* perishing.

Matt. viii. 25; Mark iv. 38; Luke viii. 24: Lord, save us, we *perish*.

Matt. ix. 17; Mark ii. 22; Luke v. 37: The bottles *perish*.

Matt. xxvi. 52: All that take the sword shall *perish*, or be destroyed, by the sword.

Luke xi. 51: Zacharias *perished* between the temple and the altar.

Ch. xiii. 33: It cannot be that a prophet *perish* out of Jerusalem.

Ch. xxi. 18: There shall not a hair of your head *perish*.

John vi. 27: The bread which *perisheth*.

Ch. xi. 50: It is expedient that one die, and that the whole nation *perish* not.—His fear was lest the Romans should come and take away both their place and nation; and thus the nation *cease to be*.

Ch. xviii. 14 : It is expedient that one *die* (*perish*) for the people.

Now it is beyond dispute that ἀπόλλυμαι in all these cases means 'perish' in the one unambiguous sense of *coming to an end*. There is no question of physical annihilation; and no notice of the actual process or duration of the event. The circumstance invariably indicated is that of an *end* being put to *the object as such*. Thus in regard to the case last quoted, it can serve no good purpose to ask, "When Christ died for the people, was He annihilated?"<sup>1</sup> For the question is not what *He was*, but what Caiaphas *wished might be*. And that, certainly, was that He, and everything about Him, might come to an end at once.

(b) Betwixt these instances of a *natural* perishing, and those of a *spiritual* sort presently to be noticed, there occurs one of a mixed kind. That is to say, we have a distinct view of *natural* perishing in a parable where the object is to represent the same evil in its *spiritual* aspect.—"I *perish* with hunger." (Luke xv. 17.) Now the prodigal in the *figure* certainly means to signify that his life is *coming to an end* through famine. Are we to believe, then, that the prodigal in the *fact* can never occupy such a situation—his actual 'perishing' consisting in the hopeless misery of an imperishable being?

(c) The remaining cases refer directly to the 'perishing' of the soul. But each of them contains, either in its own terms, or in its context, a reference to some

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Angus, *Three Letters*, &c.

illustration *drawn* from *natural* perishing: with such extreme definiteness is the meaning brought out in every instance.

Matt. v. 29, 30: "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members *perish*, and not that thy whole body be cast into hell." It is the final 'perishing' of soul and body that is threatened. Better one member perish by the amputating knife than the whole man by the condemning sentence. Better put an end to an evil passion by the pain of self-denial, than lose all in the fire of hell. Such, clearly, is the lesson of the passage.

Matt. xviii. 14: "Even so it is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should *perish*." But how perish? "Even so," as the wandering sheep, but for the shepherd's care.

Luke xiii. 3, 5: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise *perish*" (or be destroyed). Yes, as surely as the Galileans by Pilate's sword, and the eighteen at Siloam by the fall of the tower.<sup>a</sup>

John iii. 14-16: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him should (not perish, but) have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever be-

<sup>a</sup> "The meaning," says J. H. HINTON (*Works*, iii. p. 218), is "that sinners should be *as surely* punished as those referred to—the comparison contemplating neither the manner nor the nature of the punishment inflicted, but the certainty of the punishment itself." We fail to perceive the right of any one to say that the word 'perish' means simply 'to be punished'—and that, so as even to exclude *the sort* of punishment which the word directly suggested.

liveth in Him should not *perish*, but have everlasting life." Let us see how this, the greatest, perhaps, of all our Lord's words, came to be spoken. Nicodemus has come to Him, believing that, if any class of men were sure of the kingdom of heaven, it was his own. To meet this and other of his ideas, Jesus tells him that without a new birth, as originating a new life, no man on earth could enter that kingdom; adding as the explanation of this birth and life—"That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." The Pharisee still stumbles at the doctrine; and so Jesus, without further explanation or defence of it, addresses to him that gospel word which, if received, would infallibly prove the incorruptible seed of the new birth within him. (1 Pet. i. 23.) Again, the Pharisee has come, believing in a future state of protracted existence for all, with everlasting life for himself and such like.\* With a view to all this, the heavenly teacher announces that "Whosoever believeth in Him (and such only) should not *perish*, but have *everlasting life*." The connection of ideas is manifest. Israel was perishing—visibly, miserably, perishing in the natural way, and recovered the forfeited temporal life by looking at the uplifted serpent. Even so are all men, as sinners, *perishing* in the spiritual way, but can be saved from that, and obtain the life everlasting, by looking at the uplifted Saviour. Now, however much the 'perishing' of the soul may exceed in awfulness the 'perishing' of the body; and however much the 'living' of the soul

\* See chapter below, on Jewish belief.



may exceed in blessedness the 'living' of the body—yet surely the substantial meaning of the words should be the same in the spiritual as in the corporeal department. But what argument is it to say, as is constantly done, that, because the *life* is eternal, the contrary to it can be nothing less than a *suffering* equally without end? But why so? Is not the contrast sufficient between a *life* that is *eternal* and the *loss* of the soul *for ever*? Who has a right to say that the strictest propriety demands a contrast different from this; yes, and one neither expressed nor suggested—and, as we venture to say, not permitted by the words—and all because of some hard necessity for it? For where is the necessity? The contrast is surely a very terrible one between eternal life (though taken in the very highest sense), on the one hand, and the perishing of a human soul, with all its attendant horrors, on the other.

And now, in the closest connection with such an announcement—he that believes, we find, is 'saved;' he "is not condemned;" "he hath everlasting life." While, on the contrary, "he that believeth not is condemned already;" "he shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 17, 18, 36.) Thus, to 'be saved' is to obtain life—and that, the only life which we read of God's bestowing upon man as an everlasting possession. To 'perish' is to be 'condemned' to the loss of this life—and (under the pressure of the wrath which abides on the unbeliever) to experience the retribution due to him, on account of the darkness that was loved, and the evil that was done. (*vv.* 19–21.)

Thus clear is the meaning of 'perish' in all the ordinary cases. And if it had so widely different a meaning in the spiritual ones, we might surely have expected something to indicate the divergence—some trace of the stage at which the word turned off in a direction so strangely different. Whereas we have in each single case the most distinct linking on of the spiritual event to some natural circumstance, for the very purpose apparently of illustrating the significance of the spiritual.

Very true, we can suppose it said, and very plausible; and yet there is sufficient reason for taking the word 'perish' when it refers to the soul in that sense which has generally approved itself to Christians. Matter and spirit differ so entirely in all their properties, that 'perish,' instead of meaning precisely the same thing in reference to each, must have a different application, once that a common analogy has been observed. That analogy will consist in the dissolving and destroying of each, *so far as* its true integrity, and the divine end of its formation, goes. But inasmuch as matter *is* destructible, and spirit—whether in its own nature, or by creative purpose—is *not*; therefore, though the 'perishing' of the one signifies its passing away, the 'perishing' of the other can only signify its endless continuance in a perverted and unhappy condition.

Now it is marvellous with what ease it is thus assumed that the unsaved soul is imperishable. Strange, indeed, that in such a case the word of all others most frequently used to express its doom should be a word directly teaching that it shall perish—that is to say, a word expressing

an impossibility in regard to it! And why such an anomaly in a matter so solemn and vital? What better than a mockery of instruction was it to say that that should perish which was imperishable? Was the Greek language so poor as to afford no term more suitable to represent the reality of the case than one which so flagrantly misrepresented it? If the object was to express the idea of endless wretchedness in a disorganised and undone condition, then the word employed signally failed in that object. For, whatever reference it had to disorganization at all, it was only as to something which might serve to introduce that real destruction or cessation of being, to express which was the design of the word. Strange, then, if a teacher speaking Greek should have employed the word to signify (and that under so unutterably awful a form) the disordered state which at the utmost was only incidental to the real meaning;—and should have done this, too, in such a way as to put that incident *in the place of the fact* which actually constituted *the meaning* of the word! and strangest of all if that teacher was the Lord Jesus Christ, calmly announcing the decision of God, and the destiny of man!

In a word, then, while matter and spirit differ as they do, let there be by all means a corresponding difference in the 'perishing' of each, that is, in the mode or *character* of it. But still it must be a *true perishing*, not another sort of calamity—much less an entirely contrary, not to say an infinitely different thing, called by the same name. The mode of coming to an end may in the two cases differ extremely. But if the language is

to be relied on at all, we are surely bound to believe that *the thing affirmed by it really takes place*. Why say that a thing is to perish, if by the nature of the case such an event is impossible—the meaning, all the time being, not that the thing itself is to perish, but only certain of its properties? Why not at once, in such a case, use an expression plainly indicating the endless misery which is to be, instead of inevitably suggesting a 'passing away' which can never be?

It will be urged perhaps that—seeing how distinctly the unsaved soul is elsewhere sentenced to everlasting fire—the 'perishing' threatened in the places adduced cannot be anything but endless suffering. Suffice it to observe here—reserving for another place the consideration of the fire—that everything in regard to it would naturally be understood by our Lord's hearers, in its connection with the allied truth of the 'perishing' or losing of life, of which He spoke so much more frequently. We are bound, in short, to take the various expressions of each class at their true and full value. Whoever asks for the strict meaning of 'everlasting,' we on our part are ready to grant it, and only ask in return for an equally strict meaning of the no less vital word 'perish.' It would be a serious thing, indeed, to find any real conflict between expressions of such moment. Before, however, assuming this, we should surely examine our own view of any other assertions supposed to bear upon the case, in order to see whether they really do teach that the soul as such is imperishable. And no such assertion can we find.

If it be now asked, whether by 'perishing' we mean an *instantaneous* 'ceasing to be'—it is hardly needful to say that we do not. Or a painless? Neither do we mean that. We mean simply *perishing*—whatever the time or the suffering which it may involve. 'Perishing' of body may be a process very lengthened and very painful. So may the 'perishing' of the soul be. The very mention of it, in fact, is such as to excite a horror beyond that of any other calamity. And thus we meet an objection which arises from a total misapprehension of the case. It is this—'So, then, you make the punishment to mean two entirely different things—namely, 'perishing' as *the real end*, and something which is *not* 'perishing' as *the precursor* to it; and all this as coming under the one term.' Such a style of argument may be striking, but that is all. We object as much as any to make the word *mean two different things*—taking it in its one simple sense, at its one recognized value. And, so taking it, we say that, of itself—even were that all—it would be something unutterably awful as the lot of a *human soul*. But, instead of stopping at that bare idea, dreadful as it is, we look to see what circumstances are in Scripture associated with it; and then we accept the whole as the divine revelation on the appalling subject. Such is the perdition that we believe in. For who, except in this case, ever dreams of attaching any other meaning to the term? Thus, when we hear that some one has perished, we conclude that he has ceased to be. Asking how he perished, we are perhaps told—By hunger, or

thirst. How he must have suffered! we say. Or, he was tortured in a dungeon for half a lifetime. What an agony! And yet he has perished; and such—all the circumstances combined—is *the meaning* of the announcement.

In conclusion, then, let us say, as regards this and the other uses of ἀπόλλυμι, that if there be in all the New Testament a word of which the sense is more distinctly fixed—whether by ancient and constant usage, by great variety of verbal connection, or by illustrations both numerous and decisive—we must confess our ignorance of it. It is not easy, indeed, to recall any word in the whole book expressive of an important revealed truth, with as much evidence in favour of one clear, uniform sense. It need not be wondered at then, if, out of simple loyalty to our Lord, we feel absolutely incapable of resisting the evidence. Nor should it seem strange, if we even suppose the Master still marvelling at the slowness of His disciples to believe what He so plainly taught; and, instead of that, attributing to Him a doctrine as foreign from His teaching as it is fearful in theirs—a doctrine which, if unscriptural, gives a view radically false of the character and government of God.

NOTE.—For a very peculiar handling of ἀπόλλυθαι see CREMER, *Bibl. Theol. Lex. N.T. Greek*. He first asserts that the word is “used specially by Paul and John,” “with reference to the everlasting misery of man.” After that he says, “The most probable conclusion is that in the New Testament the word denotes utter and final ruin and perdition. And then he adds, “Nevertheless we must always keep in mind the expression ‘lost sheep’—which illustration warrants us in regarding the ἀπόλλυθαι as a state which may be reversed!”

## CHAPTER XI.

FURTHER, TEACHING OF OUR LORD IN REGARD TO  
PUNISHMENT.

THUS, in language with the most distinct possible meaning, and in connections of the most decisive character, did our Lord teach the destruction of sinners. He taught that God was to be feared as One who was "able to *destroy* both soul and body in hell;" that every impenitent sinner should certainly *perish*, while those who believed in Him should *not* perish, but live everlastingly. He represented it as the very utmost calamity for a man finally to 'lose his soul,' or 'himself,' after all that had been done to 'save the lost.' Beside all which, He was in the habit of putting the same truth in a great variety of forms; and to these we now ask attention. Before doing so, however, it will be proper to notice certain words on the same subject as spoken by His heaven-sent forerunner. "And now," said John, "the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Luke iii. 9.) Now it was never yet questioned what this figure meant in any case but the present one. For fruitless trees have never been spoken of as cut down and cast

into the fire, with any other idea than that of their being consumed. And yet the Baptist does not stop at the figure of a tree, with reference to the object of its being cast into the fire. For with the tree he associates the chaff; and to the implication of destruction he adds the express declaration of 'burning up,'—"He will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."<sup>1</sup> (Matt. iii. 12; Luke iii. 17.) The only possible question here seems to be—Was the speaker giving utterance to a divine truth, or only to some prevailing or private sentiment? For what can more exactly express the belief for which we contend than the declaration that the chaff shall be burned up? No one doubts that, to a certain extent, the figures are to be taken at their proper value. The righteous are to be treated as wheat, the wicked as chaff—the one as precious, the other as worthless—the one as preserved by the owner for his own use, the other cast into the fire as useless. So far there will be no question. Is it not as clear, then, and as certain,

<sup>1</sup> "This does not refer (it has been said) to the final destiny of the wicked, but must be regarded as having been fulfilled in a series of temporal calamities inflicted on the Jewish nation, in consequence of their rejection of the Messiah. The same remark applies to Matt. iii. 12, as connected with Mal. iv. 1, and Matt. vii. 19." (J. H. HIN-  
TON, *Works*, iii. p. 303.) Now it has generally been allowed that such expressions in the Old Testament did indeed suggest the analogous ones in the New. But to say that the New stops where the Old did is a very different matter, and introduces a principle which would carry us much further than we might wish to go. Would it be also maintained, we may ask, that the Baptist had respect simply to what was temporal, when he said, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"



that the 'burning up' means consumption or utter destruction—even as the gathering into the garner indicates a preserving from destruction and yielding satisfaction to the divine Proprietor? Who, in listening to these words of the Baptist, could have imagined that, while all else corresponded so exactly, the 'burning up' in the figure pointed to something so incongruous in the fact—even to a burning on and on and on—the very contrary, in short, to what the world has always understood by 'burning up'? Is it thus, we ask, that inspired men use their figures? And if so, then whether do they manage to represent or to misrepresent what is in their minds? And does it never occur to those who plead for such an unnatural interpretation that they may thus be serving another cause quite as much as that of the orthodoxy which is so dear to them?

True, it is answered, if that were all. But then, the soul being indestructible, the figure of 'burning up' can only mean 'burning on for ever.' And why, then, we ask, did John, with this in view, use such language? Why not rather tell us at once, as one of the Fathers, in professed explanation of his words, has done, that the wicked are to be like burning mountains, ever burning, but never burnt out, or like a garment of asbestos, itself unconsumed in the midst of the fire? What is it, in short, but that very rationalizing, so earnestly deprecated by those opposed to us, that ever led them to see in the expression 'burn up' the meaning of 'burning on for ever'?

But then, the "unquenchable fire"—what do you make of that? we will be asked. Nay, that is not our question now. The chaff 'burnt up'—*that* is the question. The continuance of the fire may, in another respect, be a fair question also. For a fire would properly be called 'unquenchable' which nothing could quench till it had consumed all that it laid hold of, as well as a fire which should burn for long after it had done this. As to whether that turned out to be a year, or a century, or an eternity, would matter nothing as regards the real sense of the 'burning up.' The two things have, in short, no real connection—the duration of the material burnt up, and that of the fire which consumes it.

Why then, it will be said, speak of the fire as unquenchable? Because, perhaps, it really is so, absolutely and eternally. Who can say it is not? This, however, as already intimated, is not *our* question now. Enough that Scripture uses such language in connection with utter consumption—and that too in cases where both the burning up of the object and the burning on of the fire are of unquestionably less moment than in the case before us. Thus in regard to strictly temporal judgments, and in passages of which some have been already quoted (see chap. ii.), we have the most express mention of fire that cannot be quenched. (Ezek. xx. 47; 2 Kings xxii. 17; Isa. xxxiv. 10, *cf.* i. 31; Jer. iv. 4; vii. 20; Amos v. 6.) Can any one read such passages, and quietly conclude that the same language in the Baptist's mouth not only proves an eternally burning fire, but that the chaff is said to be cast into that fire for the *burning of*

*it up*, in no sense but this, that *it* also is to burn, and burn, and burn on, throughout the same eternity?

Thus taught the servant, and how did the Master follow it up? He taught, in addition to what we have already met with, that "The broad way leads to *destruction*"—destruction as the opposite of the life to which the narrow way conducts. (Matt. vii. 13.) And of this destruction He gives some very significant illustrations. Thus He speaks, on the same occasion, of the fruitless tree as "hewn down and cast into the fire." (v. 19.) Then of the withered branches we read, that "men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." (John xv. 6.) And still more explicitly in regard to the tares, "Bind them in bundles to *burn them up*. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world: the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire." (Matt. xiii. 30, 40–42.) Shall we, then, on pain of being branded as heretical, be required to believe the very contrary of what is suggested by such language, and to see in the tares that are thus burnt up an emblem of sinners preserved as completely and permanently in the agonies of hell, as saints in the bliss of heaven?<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> "Fire is in my view a much fitter emblem of suffering than of extinction, since fire destroys nothing." (J. H. HINTON, iii. p. 304.) Such may be the aspect under which a teacher of natural science

Again, we find the disobedient hearer of the word likened to the man that built his house upon the sand—the consequent calamity being one which is well known to involve both building and builder in a common ruin. And this too, after the views of *destruction* which had just preceded. (Matt. vii. 26, 27.)

We have also the parable of the drag-net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind; *i.e.* every kind of fish, of which alone the question here is—the issue being that the fishermen, “drawing the net to shore, gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad (*σάρπα*) away.” Thus the one sort was preserved for use, and the other consigned to destruction—which, sooner or later, was the end, and the designed end, of the casting away. “Even so shall it be at the end of the world; the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.” (Matt. xiii. 47–50.) Such is the parable. And while some think it enough to accept the analogy in so far as it relates to the *rejection*, they ought not to wonder if we take one step more, and accept it in regard to the *destruction* also;—yes, and if we feel that in doing this we have no alternative; inasmuch as the rejection in this case is so manifestly nothing else than a giving up to destruction.

Once more, we have in another place a picture of destruction as complete as any of these; and then of destruction in a still more intense form—namely, where would regard fire. But did our Lord so regard it, when He spoke of the tares as *burnt up*?

our Lord speaks of the man as 'broken' "who shall fall on this stone," but of him as 'ground to powder' "on whom the stone shall fall." (Matt. xxi. 44.) Here again we may, if we will, in applying the illustration, reject one of the essential elements of it. But we should not wonder if others cannot thus set aside an idea so essential to the entire sense and fitness of the illustration.

In leaving these cases, then, the question simply is, whether the figures are significant of an *end* which, as figures, they represent;—or of an *endless condition* of which the language, figurative as it certainly is, is *not a figure at all?*

To this style of argument we can imagine just one objection having any amount of plausibility. It may be said that the argument, if good for anything, would prove too much; since the illustrations employed by our Lord commonly imply the *immediate* end of the objects referred to—without leaving any room for that process or period for which we constantly contend. Hence the analogy, it might be said, is designed to indicate the severity and certainty of the sinner's doom, without being at all meant in the spiritual case to extend to any such actual destruction as that which obtains in the natural one.

To this we answer that the one leading idea in the illustrations now referred to is precisely that of 'destruction,' and nothing else. Attendant circumstances must be supplied from other sources. But if the analogy fails as to the matter of *destruction*—a destruction

akin to that in the illustration—it fails altogether, and would never have been employed. For *what but* rejection and destruction is the lesson conveyed by chaff, tares, and trees, being given up to the fire, or worthless fish thrown to the refuse-heap? If, however, we add to such illustrations those drawn from human beings, who are susceptible not only of destruction, but of its accompanying pains, we can then see a foreshadowing of the process that is elsewhere distinctly taught. Thus the prodigal is “perishing with hunger;” and how long his sufferings are to last will depend upon a variety of circumstances. He that is ‘broken’ by falling upon a stone may linger, we cannot tell how long, until the injured life is done out of him. And so, if the whole body is to perish with any sort of analogy to the case of an amputated limb, there is ample room left for suffering at once protracted and severe. An illustration, in short, must not be pressed further than it professes to go; so that the only fair question is, as to what it does teach, not as to something else which it was never intended to teach.

## CHAPTER XII.

## OUR LORD'S TEACHING CONTINUED.

How, after such lessons, would His hearers understand Him in His ordinary teaching as to the doom of the wicked? Or, as we may put it, is there anything in the rest of that teaching (not to speak now of the passages which contain the word 'everlasting') to counteract, or modify, or in the least degree affect, the announcements thus freely made of a coming destruction? What, in short, would be the natural bearing of those other portions on the express statements now considered?

Thus we have in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 21, 22) a striking view of divine judgment in regard to transgressions against the sixth commandment. This matter, as our Lord intimates, the scribes were in the habit of settling with great ease. For, according to them, the whole amounted to this, that the outward act of 'murder' entailed the punishment of natural death by the sentence of the court called the 'judgment' (*κρίσις*). Starting from this circumstance, He states three forms of *anger*—each more guilty than the preceding one—but all of which He represents as virtually *murder*, in the sight of God, and punishable as such by His judgment. Then, as answering to these three

degrees of guilt, He mentions as many degrees of punishment. Now here is the important circumstance. All these are figuratively stated in language borrowed from the three modes of capital punishment in use among the Jews. Thus the 'Judgment' employed one mode; the 'Council' (Sanhedrim) a severer; while the sentence might be further aggravated by consigning the carcass to the fire in the valley of the Son of Hinnom. "The most important thing to keep in mind is that there is no distinction of *kind* between these punishments, only of *degree*. In the thing compared, the κρίσις (judgment) inflicted death by the sword, the συνέδριον (council) death by stoning, and the disgrace of the γέννα τοῦ πυρός (hell-fire) followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same—*death*. So also in the subject of the similitude, *all the punishments are spiritual; all result in eternal death; but with various degrees* (the nature of which is as yet hidden from us), as the degrees of guilt have been."<sup>1</sup>

So far, then, there was in the allusion to hell-fire nothing to suggest anything beyond a very painful, and possibly protracted, destruction—nothing, in fact, but what was suggested by the reference to fire in the case of the chaff and the fruitless trees.

And what other view is presented when, immediately after, we find Him pleading with His hearers on the advantage of one member *perishing*, rather than that the whole body should be cast into hell? For what, as

<sup>1</sup> ALFORD on the passage.



already pointed out, is the idea here suggested but that a man had better lose a part than lose the whole? The partial losing would be painful, the total unspeakably more so. But in each case it would be equally a 'losing.'\*

Or take the case of the man "without the wedding garment," who is "bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth." This, again, is a reference to an earthly proceeding in which the punishment was of a lingering and agonizing kind—while yet the worst of it was that it would or might end in death. And thus there was suggested the same result in connection with that divine procedure which was to be illustrated. And not only so, but in regard to greater criminals than this one in connection with the same event, it is expressly said that "the king *destroyed* those murderers." (Matt. xxii. 7, 13.) And if such be the view presented in this case, it is enough that we compare with it the analogous cases in Matt. xxv. 30; Luke xiii. 27, 28—not overlooking the severer punishment of the tyrannical and profligate servant, whose end is certainly a very painful destruction, whatever the precise form of that may be, and however long it may be his lot to languish in the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matt. xxiv. 51.)

\* "The term 'perish,' as here applied to an amputated limb, [does not mean to 'cease to have existence' but] denotes only loss of power." (HINTON'S *Works*, iii. p. 303.) Precisely so—loss of *power* to the *body*. But what to the *limb of which it is spoken*? Again, he says (p. 216) that "the *total loss* of a single member is represented as preferable to a *state of suffering* of the whole body." On the contrary, the figure, as borrowed from amputation, must yield the idea, 'Better *suffer* in losing a member than *lose the whole body*.'

If this, then, be the view given us of future punishment in such expressions, what else could be designed where it was said, "Thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell?" (Matt. xi. 23.) While—as compared with Capernaum and her Christ-despising sisters—Tyre and Sidon, yea, Sodom and Gomorrah, were to have a doom "more tolerable in the day of judgment." But there does not seem, after all, so very much to choose between, if the whole of these were to be equally consigned to everlasting torments. And this reminds us of that very explicit statement on *comparative* punishment, which must ever remain a strange enigma on the supposition that the least as well as the greatest of its measures is alike unlimited in duration;—"The servant which knew his Lord's will, but did not according to it, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." (Luke xii. 47, 48.) Ingenuity, we are aware, will never want a plea for any paradox. But let sound sense only dare to stand its ground against the ablest advocacy of the contrary—and what will it say to the cleverest pleader seeking to convince us that the numberless sufferings of endless ages can be spoken of, however comparatively, as "**FEW STRIPES**," in any other style than that of cruel mockery? Just think of one severe bodily pain—as endured throughout eternity, without alleviation—spoken of as a punishment of *few stripes*! Think of the outer darkness, the undying worm, or the unquenchable fire—under the

mildest form of everlasting suffering—spoken of as few stripes !

Or take (as we find it in His ordinary teaching, omitting for the present Matt. xxv.) our Lord's division of the human family into two great classes as to their future doom ;—" All that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." What light is cast upon this from what we have already met with need not be repeated. Enough to point out now that our Master, besides here naming 'life' as the opposite of 'condemnation,' had just given the 'passing from death to life,' as the equivalent of the 'no-condemnation.' (John v. 24, 29. Compare with this chap. iii. 14-18, 36, as noticed above.)

Or take a case in which there was reason to speak in the very strongest terms of the future of the lost. It occurs in a passage which presents to us in the most striking colours the fearful picture drawn by the prophet—"Their soul abhorred me, and my soul loathed them" (Zech. xi. 8) ; and yet what is the utmost that He sets before such ? "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." (John viii. 24.)

Once more, if we go to that denunciation of His bitterest enemies in which He pours out His soul in a burst of indignation to which there is no parallel, what do we find as the very utmost to which His aroused spirit impels Him ?—"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses, and for

a pretence make long prayers ; therefore ye shall receive greater damnation ;"—“Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell ?” (Matt. xxiii. 14, 33.)

There remains just one passage to be noticed in this connection—namely, the case of the rich man in torments. Strange, indeed, how any should imagine that they can see here the proof of natural immortality and endless suffering ! The wretched man begs that Lazarus may be sent with a drop of water to cool his tongue. The answer is that there is an insuperable bar to all further intercourse on either side, an impassable gulf betwixt the place of woe and Paradise. A very good argument indeed *for* the future existence, and *against* the final restoration of the lost ; but no argument at all for the eternity of their sufferings. To such a thing there is no shade of allusion in the reply of Abraham. The man is in a torment of the utmost intensity, and also in an agony of concern about his surviving brothers. In these circumstances he is informed that there is no possibility either of alleviation to himself or of assistance to them. Such is literally the whole of the information in regard to the future of the wicked which this case supplies. If any think that Abraham might have volunteered some information regarding the decision of that judgment day for which his petitioner was being reserved, we can only answer that we are not surprised at his declining to assume to himself either the judicial or prophetic function.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE UNQUENCHABLE FIRE—UNDYING WORM—EVER-  
LASTING JUDGMENT.

MARK ix. 43—48. This is a passage much relied on for proving the doctrine in dispute. What it really does teach let us carefully consider. "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the *unquenchable fire*." But this is the fire which is elsewhere said to *burn up* the chaff; and, as the New Testament uses the expression only there and in the present passage, it cannot be unreasonable to regard it as here employed in the same manner as we have already found it—especially when we see that the comparison, which lay before between wheat and chaff, lies now between a body *preserved* through the *losing of a member*, and a body which, for want of such wholesome sacrifice, must *itself perish*, and that by being cast into the unquenchable fire.

So far, then, there is nothing new here. But 'the undying worm'—'How' (it will be confidently asked) 'can you get over that as a decisive proof of endless suffering?'

Now the question might be a little more formidable, if the sentence ran as so frequently quoted, 'Where *the* worm dieth not.' But every semblance of difficulty is gone when, instead of 'the worm,' we read, "Where *their* worm dieth not." For, while '*the* worm' might denote something with an existence of its own, '*their* worm' can have no existence independently of those to whom it belongs. If their existence is endless, then so is that of *their* undying worm. If, on the contrary, their existence has a certain fixed term to run, *their worm* has the same. Nothing can be plainer than such language, or surer than such a principle. For what is '*their worm*'? The answer even among the most orthodox will be that it is the sting of their accusing, tormenting conscience. But what is that conscience except the capacity or faculty for certain thought and feeling as inherent in the guilty sufferer? And to say that a man's conscience will never cease to trouble him—or, keeping the figure, that the gnawing worm will never cease to prey on him—simply means that he shall so suffer as long as he lives. But upon the term of his existence, short or long, temporary or endless, the expression throws no light whatever. All information as to that must be obtained elsewhere, and applied here for determining the duration of the worm.

Nor would the case be materially altered even if *the worm* were regarded as a separate existence in the man. For it would still have to derive its support and continuance from the vitals on which it fed; and these, again, can have no place, apart from the person whose

they are. And thus, to speak of any one as tormented by 'a worm which dieth not'—whether here or in another world—must simply mean that his misery is to coexist with his being.

True, it may be said, but this very passage contains within itself the proof that the existence of the lost is no temporary matter. For "every one shall be salted with fire;" and does not that indicate the preservation and continuance of the wicked *in* the fire and *by* the fire—their term presumably coextending with the endless duration of the fire itself? It indicates, we answer, not that at all, but the very contrary. For the salt spoken of, instead of being used to preserve, only added to the intensity of the flame by which the sacrifice was consumed. And this will hold equally, whatever view we take of the sort of sacrifice alluded to. It is sufficient, in short, to know that salt had nothing to do with fire in the matter of sacrifice, except as now pointed out. So utterly at fault is the argument drawn from this circumstance.

We now come to the solemn utterances in which our Lord actually uses the word 'everlasting' in connection with the doom of the lost. The expressions are *three*—Everlasting *judgment*, or condemnation (Mark iii. 29); Everlasting *punishment* (Matt. xxv. 46); The everlasting *fire* (Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41). We commence with the first—only premising, what will come out more fully afterwards, that in each case we take the word 'everlasting' in its full sense of 'endless.'

The passage runs thus—"He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness (hath no forgiveness for ever) but is liable to *everlasting condemnation*." In Matt. xii. 32 the language in regard to the same sin stands thus—"It shall not be forgiven him; neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Here, then, in the expression, 'everlasting condemnation' or 'judgment,' we have a noun denoting a *distinct act* coupled with an adjective expressing *endless duration*. Now the *act* cannot, in the nature of things, last for ever; for, as soon as the sentence is passed, the *act* is over. And yet the condemnation is spoken of as *everlasting*. What, then, can this mean; except that the sentence is everlasting in its *consequences*? But what are these? That is another question, and to be answered from other sources. Meanwhile the information is that the result of the sentence is endless—for the simple reason that the sentence itself is not capable of being so regarded. Such therefore—without the least reason for calling it a subterfuge—without its being even an *inference* from the statement—is really *the meaning* of the language in question. Suppose, then, the same teacher to have taught over and over again that the unsaved man 'perishes'—that the body and soul of such shall be cast into hell and there 'destroyed'—cast into the fire, just like the tares which are 'burnt up' at harvest time—suppose Him to have taught all this, and much more to the same purpose—suppose Him even to have spoken of "the damnation of hell"



in connection with these other references to it—what alternative is left us but to conclude that, in now speaking of ‘everlasting judgment,’ He means a judgment of which the result is—in the very definite language of His own Apostle—‘everlasting destruction’?

And what objection can be brought against our thus taking ‘judgment’ as being what it really is, namely, an act capable of being characterized as ‘everlasting’ only in respect of its result—that result being, not endless suffering, but the irremediable ruin which so many statements and illustrations declare it to be? What one objection, we say, can be brought against our thus regarding the matter, except it be the *idea* that there is some incongruity between ‘everlasting condemnation,’ and the state of souls not endowed with immortality? But suppose that the destruction which might have been reparable and temporary is, on the other hand, irreparable and everlasting, is not the condemnation to such destruction properly called an ‘everlasting condemnation’? And thus if it should be urged that, on the same principle, every capital sentence ever passed might be called an ‘everlasting judgment’—the answer is simply this, that no such judgment is or can be everlasting, since it clearly extends only to what would otherwise have been the term of the criminal’s natural life. And thus there is betwixt all such cases and God’s ‘everlasting judgment’ a difference as wide as betwixt time and eternity. In the one, a human body has lost a life of which the longest possible term was but a span. In the other, a human being has lost a life with

which was bound up a capacity for everlasting bliss. The earthly judge thus sentences to an evil of a day; the Heavenly to one that is most truly everlasting.

So much for the expression 'everlasting condemnation' or 'judgment.' We must not omit to notice, however, that there is a much approved reading of the passage with ἀμάρτημα instead of κρίμα, giving the sense, 'is guilty of everlasting *sin*.' Now this, in the view of some, furnishes a fresh argument for endless suffering. For, if sin, as to the practice of it, be everlasting, then, as they rightly argue, so must be its consequences. But what hint is there here of the everlasting *practice* of sin? For if the thing spoken of be really 'sin' instead of 'condemnation,' then it is no other than 'the sin against the Holy Ghost.' It is strictly of *this sin*, as already committed, that there is no forgiveness. It is this that is spoken of as *everlasting*;—and on what possible principle but the one we have been upholding already, namely, that its *consequences* are endless?

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

WE come now to a passage commonly regarded as altogether decisive and unanswerable,—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” (Matt. xxv. 46.) To settle the whole question, indeed, it is thought sufficient to assert that if punishment be not everlasting, neither is the life of the righteous, nor yet the kingdom and glory of God—the duration of all these being announced in precisely the same language.

Now, as to the punishment being strictly everlasting, we have no difficulty and no doubt. But there is a fallacy in assuming, as is so commonly done, that ‘punishment’ and ‘suffering’ are of necessity identical. For surely a capital punishment would still be a punishment, even though carried out in the absence of suffering. And, granting it to be accompanied with ever so much of pain, no one would plead that the punishment necessarily came to an end with the end of that accompaniment. Suppose a young, vigorous life penally cut short—who would regard the punishment as at an end with the last gasp of the sufferer? What

more proper than to measure it by this, as at least one element in the case, namely, the natural duration of honour and joy that has been interrupted by the judicial infliction? And what difference would it make in the principle of our reckoning, if—instead of the natural probability of a certain indefinite time—we could know that no less a term than fifty years of happy life was cut short by the executioner's stroke? Should we not at once, in such a case, regard the punishment as being extended over the same term? Or would it seem strange if the judge, so understanding the matter, should sentence the offender to such a punishment? For if the loss of *liberty* for fifty years would be a punishment of that duration, would not a similar loss of *life* be a punishment equally prolonged? Extend the idea to any length of time, and the principle remains intact. Extend it to eternity, and where is the difference? To speak of the everlasting punishment of any one incapable of everlasting existence would indeed be a mockery. If, on the other hand, man was really destined, and still is fitted for such existence, but through rebellion, impenitence, unbelief, is adjudged to the loss of it, so as to undergo a real destruction, then what more fit than to speak of such a punishment as truly 'everlasting'? Does not an Apostle combine the three ideas which are so generally regarded as incompatible—the ideas, namely, of punishment, destruction, and eternity—when he speaks of being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord"? (2 Thess. i. 9.)

Now if the Apostle thus formally and in the same breath explains the *punishment* announced by him as *destruction*, did not our Lord, if less formally, yet as distinctly, and far more fully, represent, under the same aspect, the doom of the ungodly? If He did not, then our cause is lost, and we have nothing more to say for it. But if He did, then what alternative have we but to conclude that, when He spoke as here of 'everlasting punishment,' He meant as elsewhere a punishment consisting of destruction—destruction not for a term, as is conceivable indeed—such in short as comes on the body through the first death—not this, but a destruction irreversible and everlasting? And thus, as we contend, the whole scope of our Lord's teaching, as well as its every statement on the subject, has fixed in the clearest possible manner the character of the punishment announced by Him; and should have rendered it for ever impossible to impute to Him that doctrine which is now regarded as so eminently Christian.

And not only so, but in this identical place has He, by the mention of its opposite, furnished us with a key to the meaning of the everlasting punishment spoken of. For that opposite is everlasting life—the very thing so often set up as the alternative to 'perishing.' But if, as seems so natural, and has been fully argued already, the gift of 'everlasting life' involves the gift of an everlasting 'living' or existence, that is to say, a *true immortality*—then it appears that all the everlasting living, or immortal being, is for the righteous only

—the wicked going away into a condition from which the idea of such living is utterly excluded. Prove, indeed, in defiance of all that our Lord taught, the natural immortality of man; and then, from His words as now before us, and some others besides, you can well prove the doctrine of endless suffering also. But how tremendous the cost, and how bitter the consequences of such a proof! For where are we if all His previous teaching turns out so contrary to what it seemed and sounded? On the other hand, show, as it seems so easy to do, that man as he now is is not immortal, nor ever was made so by any divine arrangement; show that, on account of sin, and by a judgment irreversible except through Christ, he miserably but most really perishes—and then you show to a demonstration that everlasting punishment consists truly and literally, as in the language of the Apostle, in being “punished with everlasting destruction.” For so long as the ‘destruction’ set forth in the Bible is a real ‘punishment,’ then just as clearly is ‘everlasting destruction’ an ‘everlasting punishment.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The following from ALFORD on Matt. xxv. 46 is an example of the treatment which satisfies so many—“Observe, the *same epithet* is used for *κόλασις* and *ζωή*—which are here contraries—for the *ζωή* is not bare *existence*, which would have *annihilation* for its opposite; but *blessedness* and *reward*, to which *punishment* and *misery* are antagonist terms.” Now (1) it is true that *ζωή* is not *bare existence*. But that does not affect our view that the *gift* of the *ζωή* involves the *gift* of everlasting existence. (2) It is also true that *ζωή* points to blessedness and reward; and it is as true that the loss or privation of this in any way will be a proper opposite to it—especially if it be the fact that everlasting existence is a *part of the reward*.

## NOTE.

THE following, from an American writer, presents the objection to the above as strongly, perhaps, as the case admits of:—"Eternal death, as the *penalty* of sin, in the sense of annihilation, is an *intelligible idea*; but *that* would *not* be eternal *punishment*. The death itself, in the sense of non-existence, would be eternal; but the punishment would be its own limitation. It must cease when there was no longer a being to receive it. We can as well conceive of a man as punished a thousand years before he begins to be, as a thousand years after he has ceased to be."<sup>2</sup>

Now we thought that betwixt *penalty* and *punishment* there was the same relation as betwixt *principle* and *fact*. And, therefore, we should have concluded that, where you could "conceive of eternal death as a penalty," you could also conceive of "death as an eternal punishment." But no, we are told, for the fact of being 'punished' involves the element of *existence*, so as to preclude all correspondence between 'eternal punishment' and 'the penalty of eternal death,' even in the sense in which the latter has just been recognized as 'intelligible.'

Our answer is that the objection, as thus put, makes a difficulty where there is none. For the idea under trial for 'intelligibility' is not that of a *non-existent* person *being punished*, but of an *existent* person being *sentenced to a punishment*, namely, that of eternal death. It is quite true that we should not speak of a person as *being punished* after non-existence had taken place. Nor do the Scripture statements present any difficulty to *us* in this respect. For each of the two cases where 'punish' is found in connection with 'eternity' represents the man, not as *being eternally punished*,

<sup>2</sup> PROFESSOR BARROWS, in *Bib. Sac.* July, 1858.

but as given up to the '*punishment of eternal death*, as the *penalty of sin*'—in the sense, as we understand it, of what this writer calls 'annihilation,' or the Scripture, '*destruction*.'

In regard to the last sentence of the quotation, let us just ask of any one who has been regarding it favourably—Can you, after admitting that eternal death [in our sense], as the penalty of sin, is an 'intelligible idea,' can you as well conceive of a man being given up to this a thousand years before he was born as you can imagine him to continue given up to it a thousand years after he has ceased to be? The one you admit to be an 'intelligible idea;' the other is, under every possible form, an impossibility. How, then, are the two equally conceivable?

*Κόλασις* (punishment). This word has been so mis-represented that it is of importance to note its true meaning. Originally it signified *corrective*, as distinguished from *vindictory* punishment (*τιμωρία*);—the same relation as between *castigatio* and *ultio*. So Plato and Aristotle explain the two. This distinction, however, soon ceased to be strictly observed, for even Plato and Xenophon (*Cyrop.* i. 2, 7) use them indiscriminately. Thus *κόλασις* came to stand for punishment in general. Nor does the other passage in which it occurs in the New Testament present any other view—"Fear hath *κόλασις*" (1 John iv. 18), that is, a *penal* element connected with it. This is borne out by the similar application of *κολάζω* in the two places where it occurs, Acts iv. 21; 2 Peter ii. 9. We find it used of capital punishment by Chrysostom. (Hom. on 2 Cor. v.) And so do we find *κόλασις* used where the punishment is *death*. Thus in *Wisdom of Solomon* (xix. 4) we read that the Egyptians "were made to forget the foregoing judgments, that they might fill up the *punishment* still wanting to their torments." Again, it is said (iii. 4) "that the righteous, though seeming in the eye of the senseless to die, or be *punished*, yet have a hope full

of immortality." In 2 Macc. iv. 38, the slaying of a murderer is spoken of as the *κόλασις* due to him.

But what right do we thus get, it has been asked, to say that *κόλασις* means 'annihilation'? No right at all. We simply say that it means 'punishment'—*even though* the punishment consists of 'death' or 'destruction,' as that of the Egyptians did. The word itself tells us nothing of the mode in which the punishment is carried out. That must be elsewhere learnt.

## CHAPTER XV.

## THE EVERLASTING FIRE.

THIS expression occurs in two places—Matt. xviii. 8, "It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the everlasting fire;" and xxv. 41, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire."

In order to a right understanding of the former, two circumstances may be noted. (1) The 'everlasting fire' is the same as "the fire that is not quenched" in the parallel place, Mark ix. 43-48, the meaning of which has been considered already. (2) Another parallel to our passage appears at Matt. v. 29 (see p. 110)—where we see plainly the design of casting the body into hell—namely, to *perish*, as the amputated limb does. And thus, as it is better to lose a limb by the knife and save the body, than to keep the limb and lose the body; so, it is better (our Lord teaches) that sin be mortified by the knife of grace, than the sinner destroyed by the fire of judgment. Such is the fair meaning of the passage, whatever may be the bearing of the word 'everlasting' as applied to the fire. The fire is the instrument, in fact, by which the Judge punishes and destroys the guilty;—through suffering, indeed, and suffering fairly



meted out to guilt—but *not endless*. For, surely, it is hard to believe that the expressions in question were intended to teach an immortality in suffering, when it is so difficult to establish on Scriptural grounds any natural immortality at all. Is it not, on the other hand, as much more reasonable and reverential, as it is more agreeable, to suppose that those expressions were intended to be understood in the light of that doctrine which seemed never absent from the Saviour's mind—the doctrine of eternal life, as the gift of God for the believing, and of a miserable, but real, destruction for the unbelieving of mankind?

Why, then, is the fire called 'everlasting'?

To this it might be answered, '*Because its consequences are so*;' that is to say, because it is the means of effecting a destruction which is everlasting. Nor would it be easy in the want of a better, to set aside such a reply. It would be, at least, a harmless one, possibly correct, and certainly not in conflict with the plain doctrine of Scripture, in passages so many and varied regarding future punishment.

Or, it might be said that the fire is called everlasting, *because it is to continue while the sufferers exist*. In favour of which view the meaning of *αἰώνιος* might be urged, as applying frequently to the entire duration of a company or individual. And such an answer would certainly, like the other, have the merit of avoiding that serious conflict with another great truth which the prevailing view involves.

It is difficult, however, to rest with either of these

answers. The first seems inadequate, because the 'fire' is not a definite *act*, *event*, or *process*, as 'condemnation' and 'destruction' are; and, therefore, we are not in a position to plead that it *can be* everlasting *only in its results*.

The second answer fails, in not sufficiently bringing out the connection designed between the fire and the glory, as regards their *duration*. Besides which, we may venture to say that the word is nowhere found throughout the New Testament in such a partial sense. But if this be so, it will be hard to establish a plea for that sense in this single case—a case demanding all the accuracy which must surely characterize the final sentence of the divine Judge. Besides which, as we have seen, there is every reason to accept of the strict and full sense of the word, in the kindred expressions 'everlasting judgment,' 'everlasting punishment,' 'everlasting destruction.' And thus the license which certainly belongs to the word in the Old Testament cannot fairly be allowed to overrule all these demands for a stricter interpretation of it in the New.

For how stands the case there? Three instances we dismiss at once, as referring to the past ages or times, and therefore throwing no light on its application to a coming eternity. (Rom. xvi. 25; 2 Tim. i. 9; Titus i. 2.) Another case may be questionable (Philem. 15);—for though it would certainly be fair to consider the Apostle as alluding simply to a *life-long* friendship, yet even here, if we with our cold hearts are in the habit of speaking of an everlasting fellowship with one another,

it seems hard to regard the ardent Apostle as meaning less when he thus uses the word—hard to think of him as applying such an expression to that which death might cut short in a day. Dismissing, then, this case, we find the word *αἰώνιος* used in the New Testament, in regard to futurity, no less than 66 times. In 43 of these cases it is ‘eternal life’ that is spoken of. In the remainder we have—‘the everlasting God’—‘the everlasting Spirit’—‘His eternal glory’—‘to whom be honour and power everlasting’—‘the everlasting kingdom’—‘eternal glory’—‘the everlasting covenant,’ ‘salvation,’ ‘redemption,’ ‘gospel,’ ‘consolation.’ Then we have—‘the eternal house,’ ‘habitations,’ ‘inheritance,’ ‘weight of glory,’ and ‘things unseen;’—leaving seven cases, in four of which there need be no question as to whether a proper eternity is meant—namely, ‘everlasting destruction’ (2 Thess. i. 9); ‘judgment’ (Mark iii. 29; Heb. vi. 2); and ‘punishment’ (Matt. xxv. 46).

There now remain the three cases in which the word is connected with ‘fire;’ one of these being in reference to Sodom, the other two from our Lord’s own mouth. Is it right, then, to overlook such a concurrence of usage, and attach any but the otherwise universal sense to the expression in question? Besides which, it would be difficult to answer the oft-put question—If ‘everlasting’ means only a ‘very long period,’ in regard to the fire, what security have we that it expresses a *true eternity* in regard to the glory?

It might be argued indeed, that, as the ‘everlasting fire’ in Matt. xviii. 8 is the same as the ‘unquenchable

fire' in Mark ix. 43; and, as this latter is taken from a purely millennial scene in the Old Testament (Isa. lxvi. 24), therefore its equivalent cannot reasonably be held as referring to a strict eternity in the New. Still it remains true, that the sense of an expression must be determined, not from the figure or circumstance which gave rise to it, but from the use that is plainly made of it on the field to which it has been transferred. We are thus constrained, by every consideration, to look for more exactness and completeness in the words of our Lord than any of these views admit of. How, then, are we to understand 'everlasting fire,' in accordance at once with the genuine sense of the language, and with the Scripture doctrine of immortality?

In attempting to answer this question, we point (1) to the exceedingly *definite* character of the fire. It is not 'everlasting,' but '*the* everlasting fire.' (Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41.) Even in Mark ix. 43-48, where we read of '*their* worm not dying,' it is still '*the* fire that is not quenched.' Does not this point to a fire independent of the guilty of mankind? Does it not teach us that, while the worm, as already noticed, is entirely *their own*—lasting, in short, while they last—the fire, on the other hand, is something entirely apart from those who are cast into it—something which, as it was before them, may well continue to exist after them? And the distinction thus observed, is the more important, inasmuch as there is no trace of it in the original prophecy—"Their worm shall not die, neither shall *their* fire be quenched." (Isa. lxvi. 24.)

(2) This fire, we are taught, is "*the one* prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matt. xxv. 41.)

What, then, if there be a fire kindled by God for some great purpose—a fire called 'THE EVERLASTING FIRE'—designed originally for the first and most notorious of rebels—but into which, as well befitting them also, sinful men may justly be cast! Why, in short, may we not suppose that, upon the first outburst of rebellion among His creatures, the blessed God kindled a fire—of some sort, we cannot tell what—in some place, we cannot tell where—but distinctly expressive of His whole mind in regard to sin and its desert—a fire which He designed to continue for ever—and for ever to proclaim that mind to the intelligent universe? There is, indeed, a mystery about sin which the intellect of man attempts in vain to fathom. But so long as there is a Lawgiver must His law bind penalty to disobedience; and while penalty waits upon law must punishment wait upon transgression. Are we going beyond either reason or revelation, then, if we believe in a *place* as well as in a *principle* of punishment?—a place long ago prepared, but not yet taken possession of even by its proper inhabitants—a place, with its unquenchable fire, never itself to pass away—and into which may be cast the deceived as well as the deceivers of the great family of transgressors—even though not sharing in the eternity of the fire itself. Does it seem as if such an arrangement would be out of keeping with the real character of sin, as nothing less than the creature's war against the eternal order of the universe

and government of the Most High? And when, above all, we view this war in the light of the great propitiation;—when we think of the God-man as eternally exhibiting in His own Person the tokens of His atoning work, is it strange, or rather, does it not seem eminently fit, that there should be, on the other side, a standing manifestation of that holy wrath which sin drew forth, and to meet which the Redeemer died? That “OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE” is as true as that “GOD IS LOVE.” Need we wonder, then, if this God has kindled a fire which He designs for an everlasting expression, as regards sin, of that mind which has made for itself another, and so strangely different an expression in the Cross? Is it strange if there be kept up such a memorial of the ages that are past—such a warning for the ages that are to come? Would it seem more fit that there should entirely pass away, after a time, every trace of an evil so dreadful that only the Cross could save from it? There is reason enough surely why we should neither, on the one hand, object to the endlessness of the fire; nor, on the other, to the limited existence of those who go into it—if our Lord has distinctly affirmed the one, and has no less distinctly, however much more frequently, signified the other.

But what propriety, it will be asked, can there be in sending to an everlasting fire those who are not to last for ever themselves? And why not? They perfectly understand the peculiar intensity of the sentence; and is not that enough? For, turning to ordinary matters, suppose a volcano as burning from time immemorial,

and as still having an indefinite period to burn—would it be without meaning to adjudge criminals of a certain class to be cast headlong into the boiling crater of ‘the everlasting fire’? The great fact of human mortality would prevent all misunderstanding, while it would take away nothing from the severity of the sentence.

And here we must refer to the remarkable statement, regarding ‘eternal fire’ by one of those who had been conversant with our Lord upon earth, and had heard what He had uttered on the subject—“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” (Jude 7.) But how do they suffer such a vengeance? Did they not perish in the fire? Did not the fire even cease when it had done its work upon them? And yet the ‘fire’—not the fire of the world to come, but the actual fire which Lot escaped and Abraham gazed on—is called ‘eternal.’ And ‘they’—not the disembodied inhabitants of invisible realms, but the very Sodom and Gomorrah so long steeped in the vileness of their occupants—these, as now a blackened ruin, are represented as still suffering the vengeance of that fire. But how was this, except that the pitchy traces of the scorching rain remained behind as memorials of the judgment which had swept over the plain? May these guilty cities, then, be thus spoken of by an Apostle of Christ as, even in his time, “suffering the vengeance of eternal fire”? *And may not* the wicked be said in a similar—though

unspeakably more awful sense—to go away into ‘the everlasting fire’?

Or, taking the words in the precise order of the original, and as some do in the hope of evading our conclusion—“Sodom and Gomorrah are set forth as an example of eternal fire—suffering vengeance.” Thus will the burnt up plain furnish to all the world an example of the eternal fire; it will show what kind of thing that fire is—as a fire utterly consuming and destroying the transgressor, while yet leaving its own mark, and maintaining its own action, after its victims are no more. A faint image truly—and yet, says the Apostle, an example of that everlasting fire into which his Lord had said that the wicked should depart!



## CHAPTER XVI.

## APOSTOLIC TEACHING.

IF such was the teaching of our Lord, how, we ask, was it followed up by His Apostles? Did they, as guided by the Spirit into all truth, supplement it, or develop it, or represent it in any other light than that in which their Master had done? Did they, in a word, make the subject of future punishment in the least degree more terrible, or more like the doctrine of a wretched immortality than He had made it? Nay, rather, if we are to compare the two, might it not seem (saying nothing now of the symbols of the Apocalypse) as if the Apostles had been less disposed than their Master to dwell upon the darker features of the case? But enough; this question has been sufficiently answered from the other side. For it is a favourite sentiment, that not one of the Bible preachers equals in awfulness the meek and lowly One Himself.

Commencing, then, with the Apostolic teaching, as recorded in 'the Acts,' what light do we find thrown upon the subject of the sinner's ruin? It is all summed up, we answer, in a few words from one Apostle, and the same from another.

Acts iii. 23, "Every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." How this last clause came to stand in this connection with the prophecy of Moses (Deut. xviii. 18, 19) is not our question. Enough that the important word for 'destroy' (*ἐξολοθρεύω*)—whether as arising out of the real expression of Moses, or as added by the Apostle from other sources—is as expressive a word as could have been found to denote entire 'destruction,' in the sense of 'dissolution' and 'extinction.' To be satisfied of this let any one observe the use of it in the kindred passage, Deut. vii. 4, 10, 17, 23, 24. And thus, beyond doubt, if Moses had been asked what he understood by 'Require it of him,' he would have answered, 'Destroy him from among the people.'

Another expression, too important to be overlooked, is where Peter says to the sorcerer, "Thy money perish (be for destruction) with thee." There can be no doubt what sort of fate is invoked on the money. It is nothing short of a real *perishing*, or *ceasing to be* Simon's. In no stronger language could it have been signified, 'Let there be an end of thy money.' And yet observe, it is in company with the *man* that the *money* is to *perish*; it is only bidden go the road which *he* is going already. We may thus see the value of the very common question, 'Was the money annihilated?'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That the reader may be in full possession of the application of 'destruction' and its kindred verb, let him turn to chap. v. 37, "Judas of Galilee *perished*;" and xxv. 16, "It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to *destruction* (*i.e.* death)."

The passage from the other Apostle is this—"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and *perish*." (xiii. 41.) The word ἀφανισθῆτε, however it got into the Sept. of Hab. i. 5, is peculiarly expressive, and in the writings of the prophets had no doubtful meaning. Enough to remark that such is the Apostolic contrast to that "*everlasting life*" of which his Jewish hearers "judged themselves unworthy"—the everlasting life for the gaining of which a large portion of the city had come to be 'ordained,' or 'ordered' as if in battle array. For there never was witnessed a grander conflict than in that Pisidian city, when the place was divided between those who had set their heart on things present and perishing, and those who, having chosen *eternal life* for their portion, believed on the Lord Jesus as the one means of securing it.

#### EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

Can any one doubt whether the writer of this Epistle was acquainted with the views of futurity which generally obtained among the Romans of his day? That these were not the sentiments of Plato is sufficiently notorious. On the other hand, it is clear that, in so far as the Romans did harmonize with that philosopher, the Apostle, *if sharing in the same sentiments*, would never, by his sweeping assertion in regard to 'perishing' (ii. 12), have assumed such an attitude of antagonism to those who held them. So far, in short, as the question of an unconditional immortality (or let us say, of a possible perishing) went, the Apostle, by that and other assertions, plainly declared himself as agreeing with the

Romans where they differed from the Platonists. And so far, on the other hand, as it came to be a question of retribution for all, and immortality for some, did he as decidedly proclaim the most awful truth in opposition to the Epicureanism which as a flood had come in upon Rome. Thus writing to the members of a community, at once acquainted with the speculations of the Greeks, and aware of its own so widely different sentiments, let us see how the Apostle addresses the Christians of Rome.

(1) Observe how he represents the *judicial consequence* of sin as being *death*;—"Knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death." (i. 32.) Now it can be no 'deathless death,' or 'life in death,' that is, endless woe in separation from God, of which he thus speaks. For it was not to that that the Gentile conscience, as is here asserted, bore witness, but to something which the parties in question were supposed to understand and acknowledge as their due. Are we met with the objection that those Romans who anticipated nothing after death made no distinction of persons, but talked or dreamed of that as the final lot of all—the good as much as the bad? Precisely so; but what acquaintance had men with goodness who could so speculate on the fate of those supposed to be endowed with it? For when did any one with a spirit of child-like obedience to the Living God ever accept of condemnation to death as the best that he dared to look for? And is it not equally plain, conversely regarded, that the Epicurean theory of a uni-

versal death arose out of the tacit recognition by conscience—however glossed over by philosophic pride—of a sin and guilt equally universal?

Chap. iii. 23. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And what but life everlasting is 'the glory of God' thus missed and lost by all—even that glory which, as regained for him in Christ, the believer is said to glory in the hope of? (v. 2.)

Chap. v. 12–21. On this portion we refer to what has been said above in chap. iii.

Chap. vi. 21, 23. "The end of those things is death;"—while of holiness and its fruit "the end is everlasting life." "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus."

Chap. viii. 10. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness." If now it be allowed that the former of these statements refers to that *bodily* death which has come on all through sin, then it seems that the other must describe the way in which immortality comes to the *spirit*.

It only remains to add the testimony of v. 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." (On this see p. 69 above.)

Such are the various statements in this Epistle regarding death. We thus give them for comparison with the various statements in other language to the same effect; and in order to a complete view of the teaching as to future punishment. Our object is to ascertain whether the Apostle gives any countenance to

the view that every human being is naturally destined to 'live for ever.' And certainly his utterances in regard to *death* do not seem to favour that belief.

(2) How, we ask, does he himself explain this death? Does he give us any hint of his designing it to be taken as the wretched state of an imperishable creature hopelessly estranged from God? No; whatever might be in his mind, nothing of that sort escapes his pen. Instead of that, his synonym for 'die' is 'perish;' and for 'death,' 'destruction.' "For," says he (still treating of the 'wages of sin'), "as many as have sinned without law shall also *perish* without law." (ii. 12.) Does 'perish,' then, we must again ask, mean 'to continue for ever imperishable in sin and suffering'? For if so, then such an eternity is the inevitable doom of all "who have sinned without law." After this, no one, professing to abide by the Scripture, need say that he knows nothing about the future state of the untaught heathen. For we are plainly enough told that they shall *perish*. Now 'perish' must mean here just what it means elsewhere. And so if it be used in other places to describe the hopeless misery of unsaved, immortal, Israelites, it can mean nothing else when applied to the case of the sinning, but not saved, immortal, heathen. If, on the other hand, there be those who feel that reason and righteousness alike revolt from so strange an application of the word in this case, then they are bound to reject all such application of it in every case. For if it cannot denote endless woe here, neither can it anywhere.

We come now to the solemn words in chap. ix. 22, "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" How this passage has harassed, let us say tormented, some of the most devout and thoughtful minds, need not be told here. And no wonder, so long as those minds are ruled by the belief that 'destruction' means the consigning to endless woe. Nor need it much surprise us if others have had their dislike of God's electing grace deepened by such a view of that word;—while others again, by the same means, have had their hearts fearfully embittered against God Himself. Only allow, on the other hand, the very definite word 'destruction' to determine the meaning, and all the difficulty is gone which springs from the idea of 'eternal torment' as the end of the divine procedure described.

But it is not the word only; the context as plainly teaches the same. For there we find Pharaoh set up as one of the most fearful examples of the principle that was being illustrated; and Pharaoh, we know, was *destroyed*. Yes, and that in no forced or unnatural sense, but simply and literally destroyed. Then we have the illustration of the potter doing as he will with the clay—part of his liberty and practice being to destroy vessel after vessel when they displease him. And if, in reply to this view, we be told that the potter, as *here represented*, does not *destroy* at all, but simply makes one vessel to honour and another to dishonour, our answer is that the "making to dis-

honour" has no resemblance to the supposed consigning to endless woe; whereas the actual destroying of souls is the most effective possible bringing of them to dishonour. And thus—while the vessel "made unto honour" furnishes, from the extreme delight which it gives to the potter, a lively image of the pleasure which the divine Artificer takes in saved souls—the vessel "unto dishonour" represents the rejection and destruction of others, instead of an endless antagonism in them to Him, as giving rise to endless vengeance on His side, and endless suffering on theirs. And, once more, there is in the same illustration a reference to 'glory' which, as we have already seen, is the proper equivalent of everlasting life, even as here it is the opposite of destruction.

Still further, in illustration of the destruction spoken of, the Apostle quotes a prophet as saying, "Except the Lord had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and had been made like unto Gomorrah." But what picture could be drawn more decisive of actual destruction? And clearly in the same sense are we to accept the other quotation, "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Thus everything conspires to rescue the critical word 'destruction' in that most alarming passage from any except its direct proper meaning.

There is one case, however, in the Epistle which is thought to justify the new and peculiar sense ascribed



to ἀπόλλυμι, 'destroy.' That sense is thus given by Schleusner in his New Testament Lexicon—"I make miserable; inflict punishment; cause trouble and vexation;"—under which meaning he ranges the important passages, Matt. x. 28; xviii. 14; John iii. 15, 16; Rom. ii. 12. And why? *Because* in Rom. xiv. 15 the expression, "Destroy not with thy meat" occurs after, "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat"—thus showing an analogy between 'destroying' and 'grieving;' and *because* in 1 Cor. viii. 11, 13, 'perish' and 'scandalize' are similarly connected! Extraordinary argument—as if one could not be first *grieved*, and then *destroyed*, without the word 'destroyed' meaning 'grieved'! Why not as well pronounce that 'grieve' has in the New Testament the peculiar sense of 'destroy'? And equally strange is it to argue that—because the Apostle exhorts the Corinthians to do nothing "by which a weak brother might perish"—adding that he himself is determined to avoid whatever might even *stumble* him—*therefore* 'perish' comes to have the sense of 'being stumbled'! Why not as well say that 'stumbled' has in this place the peculiar meaning 'perish'? And yet such is actually the style in which a learned lexicographer and theologian strives to show, from New Testament usage, that ἀπόλλυμι has the sense of 'making miserable'—*because* in one case it is *associated* with 'grieve,' and in another with 'scandalize'! And on such grounds we are asked to believe that when our Lord and His Apostles, in referring to sinful men, spoke of 'perishing' and 'destroying,' they meant something

utterly different from what was ever meant by the same language in any other case!

But, apart from such extraordinary reasoning, these two passages are so much relied on for supporting the peculiar view taken of ἀπόλλυμι that we cannot leave them without trying to show what they really do mean.

Why then, we ask, should not 'destroy,' in Romans xiv. 15, mean what it means in an ordinary way? The answer will probably be—Because in this case it cannot mean 'put an end to,' and therefore must mean something like 'injure,' 'distress,' 'annoy.' Now surely if the Apostle had meant to suggest any such thought, he could easily have got a suitable word for it—especially as we find him, in the very passages alleged, speak freely of 'grieving,' 'stumbling,' 'wounding.' Might not this satisfy us that if to these he adds 'destroy,' he means that as well? And why should he not? It was a temptation to no less than idolatry that was being addressed to a brother. Why should not that, then, be spoken of as tending to 'destroy' in the very utmost sense? For, be it observed, the real question now is, whether the word is here used in its utmost sense, not what that precisely is. The design of those who employ the passage against us is not to give an instance of the *full* sense from *their point of view*, but simply to set aside *ours* as the necessary one. And then, as soon as the sense of 'distress' is made out, it seems easy to add to it the idea 'eternally.' A hazardous process surely of arriving at truth! First, to take a word in a new, but very modified, sense, and from this to deduce an

intensification of that sense to an incalculable degree, through some new association under which the word has now come. Suffice it, however, for settling the entire case, that he who deliberately tempts to sin goes about to *destroy*. The question is as to his action, not his success. Just as when in the same passage it is said, "For meat destroy not (*κατάλυσ*) the work of God." It is just as if, seeing a good work endangered by the introduction of certain foolish ceremonies, we should say, 'Do not for trifles like these be destroying the work of God'—by which we should mean no less than the breaking it up and bringing it to an end; and that, even though satisfied that no real work of God could actually be destroyed.

The same will apply to the use of the word 'perish' in 1 Cor. viii. 11. For the 'perishing' of the brother in the fullest sense—possible or impossible as that may be regarded—would be the genuine fruit of the conduct pursued towards him. And it is surely more reasonable to understand the word in this case from the many others which present it to us directly, than to tamper with the sense of it in those others, because of an assumed difficulty in adjusting to the full measure of that a case so partial and indirect as the present one.

(3) We have now seen how the words 'die' and 'death,' 'perish' and 'destruction,' are employed to express the doom of sinners. But it may be that the Epistle contains at the same time some intimation of immortality, sufficient to justify the peculiar meaning

assigned to those terms;—enough, in short, to prove that, as referring to undying beings, ‘death’ means a ‘deathless existence in evil,’ and ‘perish’ an ‘imperishable existence in misery.’ The Epistle does contain an express notice of immortality, but not of that sort. Immortality, as we saw above, is here presented to us, not as the natural endowment of all, but as the reward of those who rightly *seek* it,—“To those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality (He will render) eternal life.” (ii. 7. See on this passage p. 36 above.)

(4) Once more—to show what is involved in this ‘dying,’ ‘perishing,’ ‘losing of immortality’—we find that “On those who obey unrighteousness there shall come indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” (ii. 8, 9.) Very dreadful truly! But still not a word or hint in regard to everlasting suffering;—nothing but what is strictly consistent with the most straightforward view of ‘perish’ in the context.

## CHAPTER XVII.

'Ἀπόλλυμι (PERISH, DESTROY,) IN THE EPISTLES TO THE  
CORINTHIANS.

IN these writings the Apostle of the Gentiles uses this word nine times—besides connecting with the information thus conveyed certain kindred statements of the most decisive character. Now the sense in which the term was regularly employed among his Greek readers, admits of no question. It meant 'perish' and 'destroy,' in the sense of 'coming to,' and 'bringing to' an end. But, while this is too notorious to require proof, there is one circumstance which deserves special notice; and that is the constant employment of the word by Plato, when discussing this very question of the 'perishing' of the 'soul.' That the soul *cannot* 'perish' he is constantly arguing throughout one elaborate treatise, and occasionally in others.<sup>1</sup> That it *can*

<sup>1</sup> See Plato, *Phaedo*, throughout; pp. sect. 29, 36, 37, 65.

The following is an instance of the way in which writers who are obliged, by their theory of immortality, to take certain Scripture expressions in an unnatural sense do yet, when treating of the very same subject, make a practice of using the same expressions in the ordinary sense. Thus Bishop Butler, while arguing in the first

'perish' our Master, using the very same terms, had as positively declared, and is now followed by His Apostle teaching the same truth in similar language. Thus was the Greek reader of the New Testament familiar not only with the word in this its natural sense, but with this particular train of thought in connection with it.

See, then, how the writer employs the word. "The preaching of the Cross," says he, "is to them that *perish* foolishness," ἀπολλυμένοις. (i. 18.) What he means by this should be plain enough from the usage just referred to, unless there be other considerations sufficient to counterbalance that, and establish a different meaning. And it would require strong evidence indeed to show that the word, which elsewhere regularly means 'to come to an end,' means as regularly in the New Testament 'to be endlessly bad and wretched.' What evidence, then, had ever been presented to the Corinthians for this extraordinary revolution in language? They may have accepted Plato's doctrine of the soul's imperishability, or they may not. But they certainly

chapter of his *Analogy* for human immortality—or rather, for the soul's existence after the death of the body—uses the words 'destroy' and 'destruction' more than forty times as significant of *bringing to an end*—just as Plato uses ἀπόλλυμι and ὀλεθρος—and like Plato *denies* their application to the soul. Dr. ANGUS in his edition of the work does the same; as well as in his *Three Letters*, when giving his view of human immortality—only with this expression of sentiment, that he frankly admits, in opposition to some, that "God *can* destroy the soul; but to *destroy* it needs some external interposition—there being nothing in the make of the soul that tends naturally to death." The remarkable thing is that these Christian writers will not allow their Master to use the word in *their own sense* when He says that God's *destroying of the soul* is the chief thing to be feared by men.

understood as he did the word by which he had expressed his belief.

Leaving, then, the universal Greek usage of the word, do we find in these Epistles any trace of the new sense attempted to be put upon it? On the contrary, we find it in the very next verse, under the active form 'destroy' used as everywhere else, in the sense of 'bringing to an end'—"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise." And so in another chapter—"They were *destroyed* (perished) by serpents"—"They were *destroyed* by the destroyer." (x. 9, 10.) The passage about the weak brother *perishing*, in chap. viii. 11, can throw no light on the sense of the term. What it means elsewhere it must mean there.\*

In the second Epistle we find a recurrence to the same expression as denoting the condition of the unsaved—"We are a sweet savour of Christ in them that are *saved*, and in them that *perish*." (ii. 15.) Now, besides the well-ascertained sense of the word, we have in this passage the vitally important circumstance that the triumphal scene, as here employed in illustration of human bliss and woe, derived its peculiar solemnity just from the presence in it of the *saved* and the *perishing*—of those, that is to say, whose lives were granted to them by the lordly conqueror, and those who in the

\* See this considered in the previous chapter in connection with Rom xiv. 15. In regard to the word *δολιθρος* in chap. v. 5, Dr. Angus asks, Was it for the *annihilation* of the flesh that the incestuous member was excluded? We answer that it certainly was for the *destroying*, in the sense of *putting an end to*, something called *the flesh*, whatever the thing and mode indicated.

course of the pageant were to be cut off and pass away. Could a Corinthian doubt after this whether to retain or reject his life-long understanding of the word 'perish'? And what it meant in this case it certainly meant where we read—"If our gospel be hid, it is hid to the *perishing*." (iv. 3.) And so when we read a few verses onward, "We are cast down, but not *destroyed*," we have no difficulty in adapting, as is needful at times with all words, the general sense of the expression to the idea specially designed; namely, that, whoever might come to destruction, it was certainly not the faithful soldiers of Christ.

Turning now to 1 Cor. xv., we find some very material help in our enquiry. It is true that the direct subject is the resurrection of the bodies of believers. But what if there be indications as plain that the immortality of their souls stands on precisely the same ground; namely, union with the risen Saviour? "If there be"—is the argument—"no resurrection of the dead," *then* there was no resurrection of Christ—*then* the gospel is a lie, and salvation a dream—"then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*;"—for after all that we have believed, hoped, done, "we are yet in our sins." We had fondly fancied, indeed, that the salvation of our departed ones was secured, and their happiness begun. But, alas! it is all delusion. They have *perished* like others,—just as they must have perished had there been no Christ to save them. Now it cannot be denied that the conclusion thus indicated



would involve a total ruin of soul as well as of body. But what *sort of ruin*? That which *we* understand by 'destruction'?—or a ruin supposed to consist in the ceaseless doing and suffering of evil? This is the question; and the passage which suggests it furnishes important assistance towards the answer. For (1) we have the very definite expression ἀπώλοντο, perished, as fixing the character of the destruction. (2) We have that expression as applied to *body* and *soul* in common. Now as to the former, the 'perishing' spoken of would certainly prove at some time or other *the end of it*. Can we believe, then, that in regard to the soul the same 'perishing,' *instead of being its end*, was to be, on the contrary, a *misery without end*? Is it possible that the Apostle, in arguing against Greeks who were so hopelessly confused on the whole subject of the future life, could have written in such a style—using this one term to express the ruin of the entire man, if all the time he had held that, *with* Christ or *without* Him alike, there was no possibility of any such 'perishing' of the soul as, beyond a doubt, he meant to affirm of the body? (3) There is still another consideration which forces us to the same conclusion. It springs from the 32nd verse, where the argument is this—"What profit is there in all my sufferings, "if so be that the dead rise not?" What better, in that case, can I say than, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die"?" For observe, the alternative, as it plainly appears to his mind, is not between a *happy* and an *unhappy* immortality, but between the immortality which he was

actually expecting and no immortality at all. But how so? Would not even Socrates have taught him that, after all the miseries of this life, and the wreck of the corrupt and corrupting body, there was a happy futurity, perhaps immortality, for the emancipated spirit?—yea that, only with the removal and dissolution of the body, the spirit's true life commenced? But no—the Christian Apostle is impervious to all the theorizing of the philosopher. In the absence of his Saviour's resurrection, the entire ground as to futurity is gone from under him; nor is there aught left in nature or its religion to take the place of it. Immortality *with* Christ, or extinction *without* Him—such is the teaching of Paul. Deprive this Christian man of Christ, and henceforth Epicurus, not Socrates, becomes his companion,—“Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

Thus decisively does the Apostle settle what he meant by that ‘perishing’ which, apart from the Saviour's resurrection, he had pronounced to be the fate of all the departed.<sup>3</sup> Thus distinctly does he—as the only alternative to Christian hope—deliberately accept of a principle so abhorrent to his exalted nature. For he finds himself, in the case imagined, absolutely forced to give in his adhesion to the well-known maxim which so unambiguously expresses the utter extinction of the human being. Let us now then, with this in view, calmly determine what is the treatment due to the doctrine of the ‘never-dying soul’ Having thus

<sup>3</sup> Alford is content to say, in explanation of the language—“Perished, *i.e.* passed into misery in Hades.”

found Paul accepting, as apart from Christ, the Epicurean in opposition to the Platonic principle—whether shall we rank him with those who have believed in an unconditional, universal, natural, immortality; or with those who can see no evidence of immortality at all for any of our fallen race, except such only as shall have obtained a new life through the death and resurrection of their Redeemer?

And now in connection with all this, we must still ask attention to some expressions in the sequel of the Apostle's argument (*vv.* 45, 47–49).

It is plain that the object here is to point out succinctly the vast difference in the inheritance of men, as it comes to them through the first Adam, or through the Second. The former was only "a living soul," and could give no more than he had got. The latter is "a life-giving Spirit" in the highest possible sense. The one was 'earthly;' the other is 'heavenly'—each communicating his peculiar image to all the members of his numerous family. But the 'image' of the heavenly Adam certainly involves, in all who possess it, an everlasting existence of the purest order. Such is the life predicated of all believers in Christ. Does it seem, then, as if there were also room for the same everlasting existence—only without the happiness—apart from Christ? Does it seem that the 'living soul' which comes to us through the earthly Adam is a 'never-dying soul,' equally with the immortal 'spirit' which furnishes an essential element in the image of the heavenly? For observe, if through the first Adam we

get a *soul*, we get also a body which is called 'soulish,' or 'natural;' and that body dies; while, at the same time, there is a body which is spiritual, and which never dies. Now surely all this teaches us that Adam was earthly, and (in so far as he was liable to sin) perishable, not only as having a 'soulish' body, but as being himself 'a living soul.' And his 'earthly image' we, in the first instance, bear; that is to say, like him we are perishable in regard to body and soul alike. Sinlessness, indeed, would have given *him* immortality; or, which is the same thing, sin took it away; and taking it from him, it took it from us. What becomes, then, of the very sharp distinction so commonly made between the 'dying body' and the 'never-dying soul'? Does it not rather seem that, apart from Christ, all is death, and that only, in connection with Him, is there life at all, whether for soul or body—life, that is to say, in the sense of immortality—the immortality so clearly spoken of in the present passage—an immortality never disjoined from holiness, and the consequent blessedness? And thus, instead of confining himself simply to the body, as the mere argument would have allowed him to do, is it not plain that the Apostle takes man as man—not, as a Plato or a Butler would do, with some natural immortality, more or less, of this kind or that, but as all dying in the first Adam, or all alive in the Second?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## REMAINING EPISTLES OF PAUL.

HITHERTO we have found in the Pauline Epistles no trace of the doctrine of an endless existence in misery. Let us see whether there is anything more like it in the remaining ones. Our question, be it remembered, is not whether there may be found in these any expressions reconcilable with such a belief, supposing that to be otherwise announced;—but whether there is, either in the general tone of thought throughout, or in the special meaning of such expressions, anything involving that belief.

The following are the references to divine retribution in the coming world as contained in these writings.

Gal. v. 21. "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Chap. vi. 8. "He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption"—as contrasted with "reaping life everlasting."

In two of the following Epistles the allusion to future evil is contained in the statement that the doer *of certain things* "hath no inheritance in the kingdom

of God ;" but that, on the contrary, "the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." (Eph. v. 5, 6 ; Col. iii. 6.)

In the Epistle to the Philippians we find two references to *destruction* (ἀπώλεια)—"which is to them an evident token of *perdition* ;" "whose end is *destruction*." (i. 28 ; iii. 19.) The allusion in the first case is to an army in battle gathering, from the progress of the fight, a clear token of its own victory, and of the destruction of the foe. In the other case the entire style of the passage is such as to call for a very matter-of-fact view of the destruction intimated—in opposition to the style of exposition which would bring out the idea of misery *without end*, or an existence ruined for all good, but still *indestructible* in evil.

In the Epistles to the Thessalonians the references are more numerous, one of them being the very strongest in the writings of this Apostle. In that case he evidently expends at once all the thought and sentiment which he had to utter on the subject. The passages are these: In the first Epistle (chap. i. 10) we read of "the wrath to come," from which Jesus delivers, and which "to the uttermost" is coming upon those Jews who refuse the Deliverer. (ii. 16.) "God has not appointed us to wrath" (it is again announced), "but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (v. 9.) On the other hand, when the careless world is lulling itself to sleep, "then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape." (v. 3.)

In the next Epistle comes the picture in which the

Apostle develops what had been all along in his mind, whether as regarded wrath or glory; and in which he exhibits these in the darkest or brightest colours anywhere employed by him.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction (*ολεθρος*) from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (i. 7-9.)

*Everlasting destruction*—let us see if we can discover any element of uncertainty as to the meaning of these words. What that would be, had they been spoken by a common author of any common thing, would admit of no doubt. Does it admit of any here?<sup>1</sup> Thus, suppose we are told that Sodom or Babylon has been visited with an everlasting destruction—what is our understanding of the statement, but that its end is complete, and its doom irreversible? Jerusalem's destruction, on the other hand, although as complete, was not everlasting. And so it rose up from its ruins, and will yet rise to outshine all its past. Is it needful to say that 'destruction' was not 'annihilation' in any of these cases—while yet the disorganization was so thorough

<sup>1</sup> "Destruction (says Mr. Hinton) is a punitive banishment from the presence of the Lord Jesus, and exclusion from those displays of His glory which will constitute so large a portion of the blessedness of His saints." (*Works*, iii. p. 26.) Why, then, not at once have said 'banishment' or 'exclusion'—either of which would have exactly expressed the sense intended—instead of using a word which, whatever may be intended by it, certainly *expresses* something else, or *sounds* as if it did?

that the original object, whether for a time or for ever, ceased to be? Babylon might demand centuries for its dissolution, and may have furnished the material for cities large and famous; but it has been as completely destroyed as was Sodom, although that came to its end in a day, leaving only a smoking furnace behind. So we have heard of a world being destroyed; nor should we ever raise a question as to the meaning of "everlasting destruction," if affirmed of it—even though quite aware that its fragments were still in existence and circling somewhere in space.

True, it may be said cities can be thus destroyed, and worlds can be thus destroyed, but not *men*. It must be in another sense that they are 'destroyed.' Why, then, we ask, if the word is inapplicable, is it applied? Why, if the thing is impossible, is it affirmed? And then, as we must also ask—what is the other sense thus quietly assumed?

It is, we shall be told, such an overthrow and confusion as destroys all that formed the man's well-being—thus giving him up as the hopeless victim of an unmitigated and endless wretchedness. And in this sense the man is said to be everlastingly destroyed—*because* in this sense alone can everlasting destruction be possible for an immortal being.

Most truly it would be so; and therefore, since we must believe (so long as we believe the Bible) in a genuine destruction of disobedient, unbelieving, unsaved men—which this is not—we must decline to believe in that unconditional immortality which would



make the destruction affirmed impossible. We must believe, in short, that 'destruction' when affirmed of men, in no loose, excited, rhetorical style—but with all the calmness and precision of a judicial utterance, indicates somehow or other the bringing to an end—however long the period or terrible the shock. For we cannot believe that it indicates an act in everlasting progress—always proceeding, but never effected—a ceaseless round of destroying, destroying, destroying—without any symptom or possibility of the result as indicated by the decisive word '*destroyed*.' And if it be said in answer—'Yes, the actual, complete destruction took place at once, even with the passing of the sentence;—all that now follows being but the result of that.' And thus you too hold, it appears, the very thing that we have contended for in regard to everlasting condemnation, namely, that *everlasting destruction*, instead of being an everlasting *process*, really indicates an *act* of which the consequences are everlasting! To this you feel driven, it seems, by the natural force of the language. And, if you wish to be ruled by that, you will have to go one step further, and confess that—however an object may be spoken of as incurably marred or injured, and as suffering accordingly, during the whole course of its future being—nothing is ever spoken of as in the full sense '*destroyed*,' except where the design is to represent it as coming to an end, in regard to that which constituted its very being or existence. A machine or an animal may be thus marred or injured, and may give or suffer extreme inconve-

nience, without by any means coming to an end. But you can with no propriety say that any such thing is destroyed, so long as it continues to wear the form, and discharge, however badly and hurtfully, the function connected with its formation. Thus it might be an animal which had lost all that was good and useful, and had taken to the work of devouring all that came near it, or in default of that—*itself*. Such a creature may have been incurably injured ; *destroyed*—it has not been.

Or suppose you find, after traversing the length and breadth of English literature, some instances where 'destruction' is used in a looser sense than we are now insisting on—what have you gained? Nothing at all. You have still to show that in such a loose sense the Jew or the Greek would, or could, understand the expression (*ὀλεθρος*), as so solemnly and explicitly used by the Apostle.

The Jew—how would he understand it, but as he had invariably understood the 'destruction' of which his own Scriptures were full? For, whatever might, as to the future, be in reserve for the sinners spoken of as destroyed throughout the Old Testament—of that future no account was taken in such descriptions. Enough that a complete destruction was effected on this visible stage to which the description referred.

And not only was the general idea of destruction so distinctly marked in the Jewish mind, but there was the special connection of that with the idea of endless duration which we find in our passage. Thus, " Amalek

was the first of the nations, but his latter end shall be that he *perish for ever*." (Numb. xxiv. 20.) "God shall *destroy thee for ever*: He shall take thee away, and root thee out of the land of the living." (Ps. lii. 5.) "When the wicked spring as the grass, it is that they shall be *destroyed for ever*." (Ps. xcii. 7.)

And the Greek—how was it possible for him to understand the Apostle in any sense but ours? He was well aware of the long unsettled dispute among the philosophers as to this very subject of 'destruction.' Plato had largely discussed the question, 'Whether the dissolution of the body brings *destruction* to the soul,'<sup>2</sup> using in his discussion the very word which our passage employs—and meaning by the question, whether, through natural death, the soul should *cease to be*. He had also in the same section argued, or rather assumed as a truism, that "if the immortal be also indestructible (*ἀνώλεθρος*), it is impossible for the soul, when death approaches it, to perish" (*ἀπολλύσθαι*).

Such was the usage with which the Greek reader was familiar. And hence, the interpretation now so common, and in whose interest our view meets with such pitiless contempt, would, we venture to assert, be to him simply impossible. For never could the idea have found an entrance into his mind that the destruction of any one could mean, not the bringing

<sup>2</sup> τῇ ψυχῇ φέρεται ὀλεθρον. Phaed. § 37. It is interesting to find a parallel to these expressions on so venerable a monument as the Moabite Stone.—"Comos said, Now will I look upon him and his house; and Israel *perishes in eternal destruction*."—Prof. SCHLOTTMAN, in *Times*, May 3, 1870.

him to an end, but an act continued and repeated throughout eternity, with a view to the destroying simply the happiness or wellbeing of one whose own being was indestructible. Such a thought would be as foreign to the mind of a Greek when reading the Apostle, as to that of a Jew when reading in the Psalmist the words which probably suggested the others to the Apostle—"As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked *perish from the presence of the Lord.*" (Ps. lxxviii. 2.)

If such then be—as in accordance with all sound principle and analogy—the sense in which the Apostle speaks of 'destruction,' it is of consequence to observe that he speaks of being '*punished*' with it. And if 'destruction' can be spoken of as 'punishment,' then 'everlasting destruction' is an 'everlasting punishment.'

In the same Epistle we have further notices of future retribution. Let us see whether they confirm or correct the impressions already received. The subject of the picture is the *Man of sin*, to whom is given the corresponding title of the *Son of perdition*. That is to say, his work is *Sin*, pure and simple; and his end is *perdition*, equally unmitigated. This second title is one that obliges us to think of Judas—and that remembrance obliges us to another one, namely, where Jesus, in His mention of the son of *perdition*, says, "Except him, I have *lost* none." But not only this, the son of *perdition* undergoes a judgment, pictured to us by expressions distinctly significant of utter *destruc-*

tion in the simple and natural sense of that word—"Whom the Lord shall consume (ἀναλώσει) with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy (καταργήσει) with the brightness of His coming."

And, as with the leader, so with his followers. He operates "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that *perish*"—"who received not the love of the truth that they might be *saved* ;—that they all might be *damned* who had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 3, 8, 10, 12.)

In the next Epistle (1 Tim. vi. 9) we read of "foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (ὀλεθρον καὶ ἀπώλειαν). The former of these words may be regarded as pointing to the destroying *process* or *agent*, and the latter to the *result*. Hence ὀλεθρος is often used for havoc, or carnage; the two ideas being sometimes combined by the use of both words as in Prov. i. 26.<sup>3</sup> Thus in the case before us the 'lusts' first ruin by their destructive action, and then bring their miserable victim to the *loss* of his very self. The figure of *drowning* also seems to embrace these ideas of *process* and *result*, as expressed by the terms, thus pointing to the *pool in which* the lovers of money are drowned.

<sup>3</sup> Or, as when Homer says, 'Απωλόμεθ' αἰπὺν ὀλεθρον (Od. Δ. 489); "Ἐκαστος ἀπώλετο λυγρῷ ὀλέθρῳ (Ib. T. 87.)

NOTE.

The following *dilemma in regard to destruction*, as given by Dr. Angus, is worthy of notice.—“Most who hold ultimate annihilation hold that it is preceded by years or ages of suffering. *Either these ages of suffering are ‘the destruction,’ or they are not.* If they are, then, clearly, destruction is consistent with continued life. If they are not the destruction, but only precede it, then the destruction is not inflicted when Christ comes, as it is said to be. (2 Thess. i. 9.) . . . From one or other of these conclusions I see no escape.”

The dilemma is probably as good a one as the case admits; but the escape from it is easy. The alternative (as given in italics) is not exhaustive, but omits the very thing which we hold to be the truth—namely, that “the ages” in question neither simply *are* the “destruction,” or are *not*—but are *partly the one and partly the other*. It is true that they only precede the destruction *as consummated*. It is equally true that they form a part of it *as in progress*.

The same author thus gives his view of ‘destruction:’—“Destruction is the opposite of salvation, just as life is the opposite of death; so that as salvation is not *merely* continued life, neither is destruction the cessation of life. Each is both present and future, and the future of each is only the present in its blessed or its awful completeness.” Repeat here the indispensable word ‘*merely*,’ and the conclusion will stand thus: “Neither is destruction *MERELY* the cessation of life.” In this form I heartily accept the argument; but in such a form it is of no use to Dr. Angus.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## APOSTOLIC DOCTRINE OF DESTRUCTION CONCLUDED.

IN the Epistle to the Hebrews we find the following—  
 “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (ii. 3.) “So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” (iii. 11, &c.) “The ground which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is high unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” (vi. 8.) That is to say, the ground that defied all attempts at improvement was, with its worthless productions, given up to the fire and finally abandoned.

Very observable is the awful passage in the tenth chapter. Mark how far its language leads us. “There remains,” we are told (verse 26) “no more sacrifice,” and consequently no pardon, for the wilful sins of those who renounce the truth which they had once embraced; but, on the contrary, “a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall *devour* (*εσθλειν*) the adversaries.” True, the word here used is not ‘burn up,’ or ‘consume;’ it is not even ‘eat up,’ but simply ‘eat.’ Enough that no fire such as is here described ever does aught in the way of ‘eating’ except

to 'devour' or 'consume;'—besides which the fire in question can be no other than the wrath of Him who is "a consuming fire." (xii. 29.) And such is the 'sorer punishment' in store for him who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and done despite to the Spirit of grace; 'sorer' than was adjudged to him who, having "despised Moses' law, *died* without mercy." A strange sort of expression truly, and a strange style of illustration, if the secret meaning had been that, whereas the Old Testament sinner had to 'die,' the New Testament sinner was adjudged to the endless misery of an undying state! Strange indeed, that such a punishment, instead of being held forth as utterly incommensurable with the other, because *infinitely* worse, should be spoken of as simply 'sorer,' and be described as arising from a 'devouring' fire! And yet such is the connection in which we find even a word so dreadful as that—"Vengeance belongeth unto Me." In harmony with all which we have the concluding words of the passage—"We are not of them who draw back unto *perdition*; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Let us remember, then, what is the ordinary sense of the word 'perdition;' let us compare it with the 'devour' and the 'die' in the context; and then say whether we can find good reason here for taking it to mean 'the misery of an indestructible being.' Let us at the same time take into account the peculiar force of the expression 'save' at the end of the verse. It is the same as when our Lord says, "By your patient endurance ye shall *acquire possession* of your souls." (Luke



xxi. 19.) And what less can that indicate than the *winning of immortality*—that immortality which the sinner in the picture so miserably loses?<sup>1</sup>

In the next Epistle, with more appearance of sternness than we meet with elsewhere in the New Testament, do we find anything to support the view that is now counted orthodox, or to rebuke us for our presumption in discarding it? The answer will appear from the references to the subject in hand.—“Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*.” (James i. 15.)

“He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy.” (ii. 13.)

“There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to *destroy*,” ἀπολέσαι.<sup>2</sup> (iv. 12.)

In accordance with all which the Epistle concludes, “He that converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from *death*.” (v. 20.)

In the 2nd Epistle of Peter we have a very free use of some of the words most distinctly expressive of *destruction*. Thus we have “heresies of *destruction*”—“swift *destruction*”—and “*destruction* which slumbereth not.” (ii. 1–3.) Then we have those two notorious examples of destruction—that of “the world of the ungodly” by water, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire. And still further, the highhanded rebels referred to are described

<sup>1</sup> To these expressions in this Epistle we merely add chap. xi. 31—“Rahab *perished* not with (οὐ συναπώλετο) them that believed not.”

<sup>2</sup> The same Epistle uses the word to express the *perishing* of the grass before the sun. (i. 11.)

as "natural brute beasts made for capture and *destruction*," who "shall be *destroyed* (*καταφθαρήσονται*) in their own corruption." (v. 12.) The expression 'destroyed' is the same as in the Greek of Gen. vi. 17; ix. 11—"I do bring a flood of waters on the earth to *destroy* all flesh." Thus, what with the reference to the flood and to the rooting out of wild beasts, there is not much wanting to complete the picture of an utter destruction.<sup>3</sup> And thus "are the ungodly reserved unto the day of judgment to be punished" (v. 9).<sup>4</sup>

In the next chapter we read of "the *perdition* of ungodly men," and of the divine unwillingness that any should *perish*. (iii. 7, 9.) And without hesitation we interpret these expressions as we have been constrained to do all along. In doing this, however, it is possible that we may be met with an objection having

<sup>3</sup> The words 'for ever' in v. 17 are not sustained by the MSS.

<sup>4</sup> "This does not refer to the final destiny of the wicked generally, but to special punishment awaiting the troublers of the early churches, who, acting a part worthy only of irrational animals in speaking evil of what they did not understand, would by merited judgments be driven from the Church, as wild beasts are "taken and destroyed" for the security and tranquillity of mankind." (J. H. HINTON, *Works*, iii. p. 305.) Now, let it be granted that the reference is not to the *final destiny* of the wicked *generally*; it may still be to *that* of a certain *class* of them. And is it not so? We say it is. For the 'destiny' spoken of is identical with the 'swift destruction,' the 'not slumbering destruction,' the 'quick damnation' of *vv.* 1, 3—it is the punishment of the day of judgment (v. 9), after the model of devils' punishment (v. 4). It is the doom which consists in a "latter end worse than the beginning" (v. 20); involving, as it does, "the mist of darkness reserved" for the very worst of men (v. 17). We appeal to Mr. Hinton's readers whether they can do otherwise than thus connect our passage with its context; and whether, in doing this, they can subscribe to his conclusion.

a momentary speciousness. The word 'perish' is also used, it may be said, of the antediluvian world (verse 6) and yet that world remains till this day. Yes, but (1) the word 'world' is constantly used for its inhabitants, as "The whole world lieth in wickedness;" "The world hath not known Thee," and so on. (2) It is plainly so used in the present passage; because the mere *place* of men's abode is expressly in the context, and that four times, spoken of not as the *world*, but the *earth*. (vv. 5, 7, 10, 13.) And (3) to remove all doubt, the Apostle uses the word 'world' twice in the previous chapter (v. 5)—in precisely the same connection as here, and in the very sense that we contend for—"He spared not the *old world*, but saved Noah, bringing in the flood upon the *world of the ungodly*." And it is with *this* that the (perdition) destruction of ungodly men is compared in chap. iii. 7. Once more, (4) if it be still thought that the comparison of "the world as overflowed with water" and "the earth as reserved for fire" demands a *cosmical* rather than a *human* view of 'world,' the answer to this lies in the comparison itself. For be 'the world' what it may—the mass of human beings alone, or that, in connection with all the human workmanship destroyed and effaced, or anything else whatever—it is still in the Apostle's view "the *world that then was*"—but now is not—having, in the sense in which he used the expression, really perished or passed away—and thus being properly contrasted with 'the *earth which now is*.'

Once again does Peter use the word *destruction*—"They wrest the Scriptures to their own *destruction*."

The only *special* help to the meaning as furnished by the passage is in the following verse, where the same persons are compared to thoughtless travellers snared by evil men and falling into ruin.<sup>5</sup>

Of the two remaining Apostolic writers, *John* speaks much of 'life,' 'eternal life,' and 'death.' In regard to the very worst of sins, his declaration is—"There is a sin unto death." (1 John v. 16.)

In *Jude* we read of '*everlasting chains*' (δεσμοῖς αἰδίοις) in which the fallen angels are "*reserved unto the judgment of the great day*" (v. 6)—where it is sufficiently plain that the '*everlasting*' (the word is not αἰώνιος) extends, according to the Old Testament usage, to the period when the chained captives shall be produced for judgment.

Again, we have *Sodom and Gomorrah* represented "as an example, suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*." (v. 7.) But surely it is no design of the Apostle to refer to the unseen condition of the *souls* of the guilty Sodomites. Nor yet would it suit him to refer to the state of those souls as suffering throughout eternity. For in neither of these respects could *Sodom* be spoken of as an *example*, inasmuch as its whole doom would be a thing beyond human observation. Besides which, the same thing if true in the case adduced, would be equally true of all the impenitent dead. And how, then, could *that* be referred to as peculiarly an example

<sup>5</sup> In one other case we find ἀπολλύμαι (1 Peter i. 7) in reference to "gold that perisheth."

of endless suffering? How, in short, was there any peculiarity in regard to Sodom and Gomorrah at all, except that, throughout all the ages which had intervened, the doomed plain exhibited, as it does still, the awful memorial of the fiery deluge which had overwhelmed it? And in what sense, then, but this are we to look for the "*example of the vengeance of eternal fire*"?<sup>6</sup>

Such expressions may throw some light upon that other one which sounds so awful, and is so awful—"Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." (v. 13.) But interpret it as we may, we are entirely at liberty to maintain that the pall of everlasting darkness is a different thing from the pain of everlasting burning.

It only remains to point out that Jude attaches no other sense to 'perish' and 'destroy' than we have already met with. For he speaks of sinners of his own day as having "*perished* in the gainsaying of Korah." (v. 11.) And the perishing of Korah was, we know, a very complete passing away of him and his company. So another reference fixes the sense in which he understood 'destroy';—"I will therefore put you in remembrance that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward *destroyed* them that believed not." (v. 5.)

<sup>6</sup> "Alluding to the natural phenomena of the Dead Sea," says Alford. This we can understand. But what follows we cannot—"Undergoing the punishment, as may even now be seen [?] of eternal fire; of that fire which never shall be quenched."

Having advanced thus far, how can we but remark upon the circumstance that, whatever the word 'everlasting' has been connected with, we have met with no one instance of its connection with *suffering*. We have met with 'everlasting life,' and 'everlasting punishment,' 'everlasting destruction,' and 'the everlasting fire;' but 'everlasting suffering'—never.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE DOCTRINE OF PUNISHMENT IN THE APOCALYPSE.

Is it unreasonable to assume that we have now had sufficient opportunity of learning the doctrine of Scripture in regard to future punishment? And yet it would be a serious matter if anything in the closing book should clash with what seems so plainly taught in the preceding ones. But it would be strange also if—after the profound silence which we have met with, whether in the Saviour or His Apostles, on the subject of *endless suffering*—we should now discover that a revelation so awful had been reserved for the hard symbols and dark visions of the Apocalypse. We have good right, surely, for extreme jealousy in regard to any appearance of proof for such a dogma—all unproved as it has been hitherto. It would be hard, indeed, to say what amount of symbol or vision, as vouchsafed to the seer of Patmos, should be allowed to disturb the confidence with which we regard the doctrine of immortality for God's people only, as presented to us, directly or indirectly, by Moses and David, Christ and Paul, Peter and John—yes and by the Apocalypse

itself. For, after all, the doctrine of this book in regard to the future state is still the doctrine of *life and death*—and that apparently in no other sense than the one with which we are already familiar. This we say, both because of the confidence reasonably due to the harmony of faith, and because of the evident linking on of life and death in the Apocalypse with the life and death that were so prominent in the original Eden.

Thus in regard to *Life*—we find “the Tree of life in the midst of the Paradise of God,” as graciously reserved for food to him that overcometh (ii. 7), and as standing in the midst of the street of the new Jerusalem ready to welcome and reward the obedient. (xxii. 2, 14.) Then we have “the Book of Life” from which true disciples’ names shall never be blotted out (iii. 5);—all not found written in this book being shut out of the holy city (xx. 12, 15; xxi. 27; xxii. 19). And once more, we have the water of life as the gift of grace now to the thirsty and willing (xxi. 6; xxii. 17), and the enjoyment hereafter of the faithful and persevering; while the Lamb leads them by its fountains, and the river, with the tree of life on its either side, proceeds out of the heavenly throne (vii. 17; xxii. 1, 2). What, now, is all this but Paradise regained;—immortality restored through the Second Adam to all who are His?

And so in regard to *Death*, it seems equally the thunder of Paradise still; only it is no distant muttering, no partial scorching, this time—but the full outburst of the cloud with all its pent-up bolts, and all



the aggravation that the intervening mercy has called forth. For just look at the passages that bear upon the subject.

"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (ii. 11.) The first Adam was hurt by the first death. By sin he became death's victim—he lost his immortality. He who faithfully follows the Second Adam shall not suffer from the second death—he has regained, and shall enjoy his immortality.<sup>1</sup>

And what or where is the second death?—"The lake of fire"—"the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: this is the second death." Into this is "cast whosoever was not found written in the book of life." And, once more, Death and Hades, after delivering up the unsaved dead, are themselves cast into the lake of

<sup>1</sup> We cannot refrain from adding that there is hardly anything in this book of visions more prominent than killing, destruction, death—and always in the way of *putting an end to* human beings, when the reference is to the visible field. Why, then, should we interpret them otherwise, when employed with regard to an invisible field? Thus, why should we understand, "I will kill her children with death" (ii. 23), in an entirely different sense from, "He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword." (xiii. 10)—because the one refers to the future world, and the other to the present?

The title *Apollyon*—This is thought to show that the word ἀπόλλυμι can well bear the sense of 'torment'—because Apollyon or Destroyer appears as the king of the Scorpions, whose business it was 'not to kill men but to torment them five months.' But how does the work of tormenting, as committed to one who is characterized as a Destroyer, show that 'destroy' may mean 'torment'? What can be more fit than to commit such a work to him who is the prototype and prince of destroyers, without his thereby becoming less of an actual destroyer? Suppose some special piece of corporal chastisement committed to one whose business it was to 'execute,' would it follow that 'execute' meant in that and a great many other cases to 'flog'?

fire. (xx. 14, 15; xxi. 8.) That is to say, the first Death with its Hades is swallowed up in the lake of fire, to which these now give place. The keepers and their prisoners are at last consigned to one common lot—even a place in the great prison-house of the SECOND DEATH. But now if the second death is at all, as its name would import, like to the first death;—if it is to correspond in any way to the judgment with which the history of the world opens—then there need be no difficulty in concluding that, instead of the unnatural sense of an endless continuance in misery, it must indicate a real ending of existence itself.

And what else should it indicate? The first death is the quitting of the world now visible, with dissolution of the body. What, then, should the second death be but the quitting of the world now called the 'invisible,' with dissolution of the soul and all? It may be a long time, indeed, before the 'lake of fire' shall have done its dire work;—and very awful will, certainly, be its action upon its miserable victims. Still, it will be the SECOND DEATH. All that was left undone by the first will be taken up and consummated by it. The retribution so exactly meted out in the court above will then have come down to the uttermost. The destruction so often announced will then be complete. That ancient word 'UTTERLY DIE,' will stand out in all its dreadfulness. And surely there will not thus be left,—as some strangely fear—any room for God's loyal subjects to complain that the threatenings of time have been inadequately fulfilled. For then—whatever we

may regard as the true end of punishment; whether the full expression of God's mind in regard to sin; or the vindication of His government; or the abolition of sin itself; then—instead of an infinite and interminable process of punishing, as if somehow, at each successive cycle of the eternal ages, the Judge had still failed to work out His object—instead of any such incomplete exhibition of principle, or execution of purpose, suggesting feebleness on the one hand, or cruelty on the other—instead of anything approaching by the minutest degree to this, will the whole design of the Governor, and the whole doom of the offender, stand forth conspicuous by the casting of the impenitent into that “lake of fire, which is the SECOND DEATH.”

Such, we say, is *the doctrine* of the Apocalypse in regard to future punishment. But, as is well known, there are expressions in two passages highly symbolical (xix. 3; xx. 10; and the liberty is taken of adding a third, xiv. 11), which are constantly quoted as sufficient to prove the dogma of endless suffering.

“Her smoke rose up for ever and ever” (*eis τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*). Such is the first of the two passages; the argument being that the expression here used for duration can signify nothing but an actual eternity. And, were we to plead for any other meaning, we should not unnaturally be accused of tampering with invariable usage, in the same fashion as that of which we have so often complained. Let it be freely granted, then, that

'for ever and ever' means here what it means everywhere else in the New Testament.<sup>2</sup>

But this, however clear it be, does not settle the case. *Whose* smoke, we have still to ask, was it that rose up? And the answer is, The smoke of "the great harlot which corrupted the earth." But that is not a *person*, nor to be confounded with any individual in the matter of punishment. It is no other than "Babylon the Great" which was to be *burnt up*—consumed in fire—and to excite the wailing of all who should see the smoke of her burning. (xviii. 8, 18.) Already had the literal Sodom afforded such a spectacle of ascending smoke; yea more—"an example of eternal fire," after its inhabitants had been all consumed. (Jude 7; Gen. xix. 28.) Already had a similar word been spoken, and, according to its designed meaning, fully carried out in regard to the literal Babylon—"The dust thereof shall be turned into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch: it shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever." (Isa. xxxiv. 9, 10.)

Now, surely, it is not possible to dis sever these pictures of judgment from the case in hand. *Individuals* there were who suffered in the ancient Sodom and the Chaldean Babylon. But it was Sodom's smoke, and Babylon's smoke, not *theirs*, that went up. So, in

<sup>2</sup> The expression *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*—"to the ages of the ages," occurs in Gal. i. 5; Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Peter iv. 11; v. 11; Rev. i. 16, 18; iv. 9, 10; v. 13, 14; vii. 12; x. 6; xi. 15; xv. 7; xix. 3; xx. 10; xxii. 5.

regard to the modern Babylon, it will, in so far as it is a city, have its inhabitants; in so far as it is a system, its agents; and these will be punished, as individuals, according to their deeds. But still the truth remains—it was “*her* smoke that rose up for ever and ever.” And if asked for the fair meaning of such a picture, we can only answer—in accordance, we think, with the entire Scripture style and teaching on such themes—that it points to the designed exhibition or memorial of God’s vengeance against that monstrous system by which His glory both has been and will yet be so fearfully mocked—even that “man of sin” that exalts himself above all that is called God, concentrating in his one self more than has ever yet been done or dreamt of in the way of insane rebellion against the being or rights of the most High. How this vengeance is to be accomplished it is not for us to tell. But one thing we can very plainly see; and that is, a most distinct harmony between it and *the everlasting fire*, as pictured by our Lord.

We ask now, whether this view seems to be corrected or confirmed by the second case (xx. 10) adduced in favour of endless suffering? Is there any other reasonable way of explaining the symbols there?—“The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Now mark, there is still not a word here about *individuals* of mankind;—even such as “worshipped the beast,” and were “deceived by the false prophet.” Not

even when *individuals* (the kings of the earth and their armies) are represented as serving under the beast, and the beast and his ally are spoken of as cast into the lake of fire, is there a word about these *individuals* being cast with them. (xix. 19, 20.) And why this distinction, but to display the difference between the parties in the vision?

What, then, are we to understand by "the beast and the false prophet"? The one is the huge world-power of the 13th chapter—represented by a monster, in the form of a leopard, with the feet of a bear, and the mouth of a lion—having seven heads and ten horns. The other is the second beast—with horns like a lamb, and speaking as a dragon—which acted so much as the vicegerent of the first. (xiii. 11–17, *cf.* xix. 20.) Is not this enough to show that the fire, into which such parties are cast, is a thing which *can exist independently of individuals*? It is even a fire which sends up its smoke for ever and ever, in the case of the beast which is cast into it, and which, as so cast, is said "to go into perdition." (xvii. 8.) It is exactly, in short, as in Daniel's vision, where the beast—the same beast, no doubt—is represented as having "its body destroyed and given to the burning flame"—the explanation being—"They shall take away his dominion, to *destroy* and *consume it unto the end.*" (Dan. vii. 11, 26.)

Is it right, then, we deliberately ask, can it be right, to take these visions of divine judgment and endless fire as connected with systems so monstrous, and hold them up before men, as equivalent to that exclusion

from God's kingdom which awaits the unregenerate mass—that 'perdition' which is in store for the whole company of the impenitent? Above all, can it be right to make use of such pictures as illustrative of some strange complacency with which the blessed in heaven, in union with the Father, Son, and Spirit, are supposed to contemplate the everlasting agonies of the lost?

It only remains that we examine the *third* case alleged with the same view. And here it must be granted that the passage adduced sounds more to the purpose than the preceding ones. For, instead of its being some monstrous beast or Babylon that is now to be dealt with, it is actually individuals of mankind who are to be punished—namely, the worshippers of the beast, of whom it is said, "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." (xiv. 11.) But then the expression denoting the period is no longer the 'for ever and ever' of the other cases; it is no more the well-known and strong expression for an actual eternity. On the other hand, it is an expression met with *here only*. That is to say, instead of '*the ages of the ages*,' as elsewhere, we now have simply 'ages of ages' (αἰῶνας αἰώνων). But are not the two expressions, it will be asked, really equivalent—differing at the utmost in form only, not in sense? To assume that, we answer, is more than any one is entitled to do. The whole question is one of usage; and usage depends just upon such matters as form and idiom. The fuller of the two expressions we accept as indicating eternity—*because*,

as already pointed out,<sup>3</sup> such is the constant application of it. The shorter one we cannot so take, *because* we know of no such application of it.<sup>4</sup> If told that our objection is only technical, and our argument nothing but special pleading—Far from it, we answer; for here, out of three texts, all of which are considered decisive of endless suffering, we have to deal with the only one—yes, and the only passage in the Bible—which even professes to connect such suffering with *individuals of mankind*. And finding that the expression relied on as decisively pointing to *eternity* is really *unknown in that connection*, we think we are more than entitled to object to such an application of it. Had we, indeed, as much—or one-tenth—as much—of scriptural support for the dogma in question as we have against it—then we might admit the probability that the expression, peculiar though it be, really refers to it. But, believing that neither authority nor ingenuity can bring such a sense out of any other portion of the divine word, we think we have a right to resist the finding of it here. We are constrained, in short, for such reasons, to accept the expression before us as answering very much in sense as in form to our own phrase ‘ages upon ages;’ that is

<sup>3</sup> See note, page 197, above.

<sup>4</sup> It may better appear how little authority there is for taking *αἰών* without the article as referring to the *coming eternity* when we take into account the whole of such usage in the New Testament. The cases are Jude, v. 13, *εἰς αἰῶνα* (and possibly 2 Peter ii. 17)—with nothing either in itself or its connection to entitle it to settle a *controversy*; and 2 Peter iii. 18, *εἰς ἡμῶν αἰῶνος*—an expression too peculiar to be allowed to rule the ordinary use of the word.



to say, a very long but indefinite period. And why should we not regard it as really intended to signify—what the form of the words seem to suggest—a period taken out of the eternity which the full expression denotes—a certain *number of ages* belonging to the *infinite series of the ages*? But be this as it may, it would be a rashness, from which we shrink, to assume that this one instance of a peculiar phrase can carry on its own head the tremendous weight of the proof of everlasting torments.

#### ON THE EXPRESSIONS FOR DENOTING THE DURATION OF FUTURE SUFFERING.

STATEMENTS like the following have been extremely common: "If," says Moses Stuart, "the Scriptures have not asserted the endless punishment of the wicked [*i.e.* as immortal beings], neither have they asserted the endless happiness of the righteous, or the endless glory and existence of the Godhead. The one is equally certain with the other." And Dr. Angus (*Three Letters on Future Punishment*, i. 6), after referring to the three expressions, αἰώνιος, εἰς αἰῶνα, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, adds, "These are the only phrases used in Scripture to set forth the duration of the future glory of the redeemed; the duration of the honour of God Himself; and all are used to set forth the punishment with which those are visited who reject the gospel. Every form of words employed in Scripture to denote everlastingness our Lord and His Apostles employ to describe the state of those who die in sin and unbelief." Now this might be true, and yet not involve the doctrine of endless *suffering*. But as the statement is far from accurate, it is important to show how the matter stands.

Besides, then, these three expressions (one of which, Jude, *v.* 13, is used only of the wicked), there are at least seven others which are accepted as describing 'everlastingness,' but are never employed in regard to punishment. These are, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας (Rom. i. 26; ix. 5; xi. 36; xvi. 27; 2 Cor. xi. 31; Heb. xiii. 8); εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα (Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21, 24, 28; 1 Peter i. 26; 1 John ii. 17; 2 John 2);

εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος (Heb. i. 8); εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας (Jude v. 25); The King, τῶν αἰώνων (1 Tim. i. 17); εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος (2 Peter iii. 18); εἰς πάσας τὰς γενεὰς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων (Eph. iii. 21.) And then, besides the use of phrases like these, the New Testament employs still other methods for setting forth the duration of God and His saints. For, is there no note of 'everlastingness' in such expressions as, 'The Living God,' 'The Living Father,' 'The incorruptible God,' 'Who only hath immortality,' 'The Father who hath life in Himself,' 'The Son who hath life in Himself,' 'The First and the Last,' 'Who was, and is, and is to come'—together with the various passages in which the *eternity* of the divine *existence* is directly affirmed (see chapter vi.)? And is it nothing, in connection with such language, that some should be spoken of as obtaining 'incorruptibility' (Rom. ii. 7); that 'life and incorruptibility' should be represented as springing out of 'the purpose and grace of God which was given us in Christ Jesus' (2 Tim. i. 9, 10); that 'this corruptible' should 'put on incorruptibility, and this mortal immortality' (1 Cor. xv. 53); or that He who is 'alive for evermore' should declare, 'Because I live, ye shall live also' (Rev. i. 18; John xiv. 19.) Thus we see that, while *some* of the expressions denoting eternity are applied in common to the future of the saved and of the lost, those on the one side are so employed, *in connection with all that involves life, and those on the other with all that indicates destruction.*

## CHAPTER XXI.

## THE DOCTRINE OF DESTRUCTION IN RELATION TO OTHER TRUTH.

EVERY Christian truth must be related to, and in harmony with, every other; and this harmony will afford no mean test of the soundness of a belief. Let us see, then, how the belief now maintained stands in relation to certain other truths.

I. *In its relation to Sin.* Now what is sin? "Sin is lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*, 1 John iii. 4), or the setting aside of the law. But the law is the divine method of setting up God. Sin, therefore, aims at the putting down, or dethroning of God. It would, in fact, if it could, take away the very life of God. For it is impossible to conceive of sin, when it reflects at all, under any lighter form than that of the thought—'I wish He were not so holy, at least not towards me. I wish He would not thus obtrude His presence upon me, insisting upon *His* will, *His* way, *His* glory!' But so to desire the end of God's presence, holiness, will, glory, really differs in nothing from desiring an end of Himself—Himself as He is, and ever must be. For take away these His high attributes, and God is God no more. Such is the meaning of every thought of sin when it thinks at all.

Such is the meaning of all its un-thought, when it so stupefies the mind that it cannot, or will not, think.<sup>1</sup>

This being the case—may sin, we are led to ask, be properly regarded as an infinite evil? It *may*; and it *may not*. It may, so far as its *object* is concerned; inasmuch as the wicked thought, if realized, would result in an evil *strictly infinite*. But it may not be so regarded, as far as the *subject* is concerned; since no finite being is really capable of any *feeling* or *act* which can be truly regarded as infinite. Combine these two thoughts, and it appears that man, in sinning, is as nearly guilty of an infinite evil as his nature admits of. Thus may he regard himself; and thus may he expect the righteous Judge to regard him. Has the sinner aimed, then, at the overthrow, the death, the end of the law and the Lawgiver? So let the law and the Lawgiver pronounce *his* death, *his* end. The evil of sin was in one sense infinite; so, in one sense, will the penalty be infinite also. But as there must ever be an infinite difference betwixt infinite guilt and the guilt of a finite creature, so is there an infinite difference betwixt the everlasting suffering of wrath, and the loss of everlasting life. And yet even, with the latter, the retribution

<sup>1</sup> "The blackness of the heathen idolatry was in the changing the glory of the incorruptible God (Rom. i. 23), and erecting resemblances of Him contrary to His immortal nature, as if the Eternal God, whose life is as unlimited as eternity, were like those creatures whose beings are measured by the short ell of time. 'There is in the nature of every sin a tendency to reduce God to a not-being. He that would put an end to God's glory by darkening it, would put an end to God's life by destroying it.'—CHARNOCK *on the Divine Attributes—Sermon on Eternity*.

is perfect. The creature, for virtually seeking the end of the Creator's life, is condemned to lose his own. 'Let God die' was the impotent voice of the sinner. 'Let the sinner die' is the terrific thunder which heaven rolls back as its response to the cry of godlessness.

II. *In relation to Divine Justice.*—Now it is undeniably a first principle in government that justice will always proportion punishment to offence. And, according to our doctrine, there is ample room for such a proportioning, from the least to the very greatest amount of moral evil ever committed. It admits of "few stripes" for sins of ignorance, and of stripes however "many" for the sins of the duty-knowing, God-defying rebel. On the other hand, there neither is nor can be any proportion between the sin of a day and the suffering of an eternity. It is vain to attempt the proof of it. The mind staggers under the weight of the attempt, and the heart shrinks with horror from the imagined success of it. Once prove, indeed, that man has committed evil bearing the stamp of infinity, and then it may seem as if you had also proved his just liability to infinite, that is everlasting, suffering. But no, not even then. For why should not he who has, in a day, *done* what is infinite as to sin, be able in less than an eternity to *endure* what is infinite as to woe?

Of what use is it, then, to be ever reminding us that the sin of a moment is constantly followed by the punishment of years? The fact is too notorious to be for an instant overlooked. Nor can the perpetual exhi-

bition of it as a solution of our problem serve any end, but for the exercise of that rhetoric which is far too freely expended on this awful theme. For still there is a proportion, most solid and distinct, between the sin of the moment and the suffering of the lifetime. Each has its own character, whether as regards offence or penalty; and the design is that these be brought into as close a relation as a human tribunal can arrange. It is in the same way that a very slight force rightly applied to some complex mechanical combination may serve to move the heaviest weight. That only proves the perfection of the relationship between the things combined. But it is vain to seek for any analogy betwixt temporal suffering however protracted, and a supposed eternal suffering however light—as a retribution proportioned to the respective offences that have to be punished. And for this simple reason, that there is no proportion betwixt time and eternity.

Thus one is more than surprised to find in how easy a way the whole moral difficulty attaching to endless suffering is sometimes met. For “after all,” as we have been told, “it is only a question of degree.” Do you think so? I ask. Can you really regard the difference between time and eternity as only a question of degree? To my mind it is one of infinity. To me billions of billions of ages are *infinitely* less than eternity; and the heaviest of sufferings for any ages thus counted not to be named beside the lightest for ages that are countless. So when it is urged that *the one* real difficulty lies in the permission of moral evil, with its inevitable con-

sequences;—when it is said, ‘Explain this to me, and I will explain to you the mystery of endless suffering,’ my answer is—Sin is, certainly, a mystery which I, for one, make no attempt to solve. But there is surely a difference among things which have the common property of being mysterious, and which are, in some respects, alike inexplicable. Hard dialectic may proclaim that there is none, and may endeavour, in its own way, to make good the assertion. But I am much mistaken if either the reason or the conscience—not to say the heart of man—can find no difference between the two difficulties or mysteries in question—namely, sin with *terminable*, and sin with *interminable* consequences. The ideas are, as far as I can apprehend them, infinitely farther apart than the most widely removed conceivable objects in thought-confounding space. The views that they give of the government of God are as different as the views that they give of the destiny of man. And, as to the Bible, it seems a different book from beginning to end, according as the sin which it details is regarded, on the one hand, as involving a suffering which is endless—or, on the other, as followed by sensible results which, however protracted or awful, are yet not interminable.

A more plausible and extremely popular way of reconciling eternal justice and eternal woe is to urge as an easy axiom, that ‘Endless sin *must* entail endless suffering.’ But mark the difference. The theologian considers his case perfect when he justifies or explains the sufferings of the lost as nothing more than the fit,

righteous, necessary accompaniment of ever-renewed and never-ending sin. The Bible, on the other hand, rejects, as justice ever does, all idea of sentencing to suffering for prospective sin—not to say endless suffering for presumed endless sin; and, instead of that, explicitly declares the punishment in the Judge's sentence to be the award not of any accumulation of evil, possible or certain, but strictly and solely of *the deeds done in the body*. Such is the theology of the Bible. Who will point out to us the trace of a contrary? When, then, will theologians have done with that *constructive* habit which has conjured up so many monsters on the religious stage, and consigned so many of the truest believers to all the sufferings which time at least would allow of?

And again, such a plea for God's justice can be maintained only at the expense of His goodness. For why the endless sin? Why the immortal sinner? If 'the deeds done in the body' are sufficient to warrant the endless suffering—then say so. But if not, what an idea it gives of the All-righteous One to represent Him as sustaining throughout eternity—with no alternative but their sinning for ever and suffering for ever—those who, when judged for their deeds, had not as yet merited the sentence to such suffering! Could there be a more flagrant inventing of an argument in support of a desperate conclusion already determined on?

III. *In relation to God's gift of His Son*;—upon a right view of which single point the whole question,



we are often told, may be confidently staked. Many speak, indeed, as if this, that is to say, *their* opinion about it, should overrule every consideration at variance with the doctrine of eternal woe as the due wages of sin. Redemption, they plainly declare, would be no redemption to them, except as it delivers from that; and the sacrifice of Christ, if offered for any lower purpose, they could only regard as grossly extravagant, or utterly unintelligible.

Now truly there might be some temptation to such sentiments, if it were maintained that the Incarnation and Atonement had taken place on behalf of creatures incapable of immortality. Then indeed the divine gift and the matchless Sacrifice might well be regarded as the acme of extravagance. But if, on the other hand, the truth be that man was framed, and still is fitted for immortality; that by rebellion he has lost, and through the Cross regains it: and if, besides this, it be distinctly held that the 'perishing' from which Christ saves involves all the retribution, whether as to intensity or duration, which justice can award consistent with the loss of immortality—then surely we have little need to seek for any unnatural sense of the Saviour's language, when He represents it as God's object in the giving of His Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him *should not perish*, but have *everlasting life*." For who will venture to say that such a redemption was unworthy of the Father's love and the Son's sacrifice, unless we introduce into it an element which we have not yet met with in the book of God? Is not the human soul,

when thus regarded, a thing of sufficient value; and sin, with its attendant death, an evil of sufficient magnitude—to justify at once in the divine regard, and in the view of the moral universe, the great transaction between the Father and the Son? By what measuring-line shall we presume so to sound the depths of eternal justice, as to pronounce that sin and ruin, when thus regarded, afforded no sufficient occasion for the Christian redemption? Be it that sin is an infinite evil, Is not the everlasting *loss* of the soul an infinite evil too? If the slain Lamb has, with His own blood, bought us FOR GOD, then there was for us, as unbought, nothing but the outer darkness, and the second death, with no possibility of our being God's any more. And are we not, with all this before us, in a position to respond, with our whole mind, and heart, and conscience, both to the demand of justice and the grant of love, when God spared not His own Son?

IV. *In relation to the Saviour's substitution.* What, then, can be imagined more complete than the correspondence between this and the sentence under which the sinner was to die? Guilty life ransomed by innocent life sacrificed; deserved death averted by undeserved death endured—such is our doctrine. And what more is wanted in order to feel the perfection of the harmony than to view the simple picture which the Scripture thus presents to us?

'But no,' we are told. 'You may say what you will, there is no harmony in the matter—only discordance

and confusion. To meet the case according to your principles, the Saviour should have been *annihilated*. That would have been the true substitution—the only death admissible, as a ransom from the death proclaimed by you.’ Such is the objection by which we are met in our meditation upon what seems so simple and complete. Now even to understand the objection is hard enough; but to hear it from those who contend that endless suffering alone can fill up the just measure of sin’s wages is more than strange. Is it possible that such could be remembering their own creed when thus objecting to ours? Did it escape them that their view requires that the Saviour should be now at some point in the cycle of everlasting suffering, quite as much as our view requires the thing alleged?

And what, after all, is there in our belief to excite such astonishment? *We* were to have died, and *Christ* died for us. *Our* life was forfeited, and He gave *His* as a ransom for many. So says the Scripture; and all that we do is to take the sentence of our death as meaning that we were to have lost our own life—putting beside this the fact of the Saviour’s giving up *His* life for ours. In doing which, we profess to see a perfect and sublime correspondence between the ruin and the redemption, the debt and the payment. But if, after all, there be about the God-man and His death something so gloriously peculiar as to preclude the possibility of a complete parallel, it is neither we nor our belief surely that can be held responsible for that. Enough if there be between the two elements of the case all the corres-

pondence that the circumstances admit of. To overstep that would not be to realize but to ruin the harmony. Do we not find, then, all that is wanted for harmony in the fact that Christ gave up as our ransom that life whose worth depends upon the worth of His very Deity—gave it up with every token of the absolute surrender due from a creature, and every accompaniment of the suffering due to a sinner? How, we ask, could there be harmony as between our obligation and His sacrifice, if this be *not*? ‘Let God die,’ had been the sinner’s thought; and the Law—not able to unmake itself in the interest of lawless mercy, but meting out the exact award due for such offence, replied, ‘Let the sinner die.’ And now the strictest justice and the tenderest mercy have agreed that the God-man shall die instead—in order that the sinner may live. And there is, you tell us, no harmony here. But rather, we are to seek it in some imagined correspondence between two things so little commensurable as these—the death due to us under the form of an existence in endless misery, and the giving up by the Saviour of His life for us during a portion of three days. And this is the harmony in comparison with which our doctrine of ‘life for life’ is held to be contemptible!—the doctrine, that is to say, that the life of the Redeemer, in the only sense in which He could part with it, was sacrificed and surrendered in order to the redeeming and restoring of our life as a thing already condemned and forfeited.

There is one case in particular which belongs to this head—furnishing, as we think, at once a strong confir-

mation of our view, and a severe test of the contrary. It is that of infant-redemption. *Redemption* we say; for there is no question here of a moral *renewal*. What, then, is any dying infant *redeemed from*? *Death*, of course—*eternal death*. As to that we agree. But what is eternal death? Eternal woe? Then from that the infant is redeemed. And if redeemed from that—then *to that* it was justly liable; and none need be ashamed either to believe or to confess it. This, then, is the test—Can you believe that an infant, as an *immortal* creature, is graciously redeemed by the blood of Christ from the death justly due to it [the contradiction is not ours] in the sense of *endless suffering*? Some (many, we shudder to think) will fearlessly accept the test, and say, ‘Yes, we believe it.’ Such we leave to their belief—only remarking that those who believe that should not wonder at the power of belief on the part of any, or in favour of anything. Others again will be staggered at the thought—will feel it to be as near as possible to an impossibility—that the redeemed babe—all incapable of an evil thought or deed as it ever was—should, by the triumphant shout, “Thou hast redeemed me to God by Thy blood”—intend to signify that it was justly liable to an eternity of suffering, from which it needed the dying Lamb to rescue it. Some, we say, will reflect ere they conclude thus; and some of these will be constrained to say, ‘No—it is impossible.’ What, then, we repeat, is the death from which that morally unconscious human being is redeemed?

V. *In relation to the Love of God.*—Let us here disclaim at once all attempt at reconciling with divine love the appalling facts of human sin and misery. There are those, we know, to whom this is quite an easy task. They have their formula always at hand for the solution of any difficulty. Others go farther, speaking of justice as only a form of love—all punishment temporal or eternal being purely an exercise of divine benevolence. This we do not profess to understand. Enough for us to submit where we cannot explain—believing that the divine action is altogether righteous, and in accordance too with the perfection of love, even where the harmony between them is as yet veiled.

We must allow the difficulty, then, to stand untouched. Sin, we confess, presents a mystery to us unfathomable; but sin being granted, punishment follows with extreme simplicity. So far we can subscribe to the *idea* of the challenge, ‘Explain to me sin, and I will explain to you suffering.’ But it will make a marvellous difference in the task, so far as *goodness* is concerned, whether the suffering be temporary or eternal. That is to say, it is an altogether different problem whether, on the one hand, we regard the creature who is permitted to sin as thereby given up to everlasting sinning and everlasting suffering, in virtue of his immortality; or, on the other, as losing his immortality, and so cutting short his suffering by the very act which originally occasioned it. In regard to justice, of course the problem is in either case the same; for that can as little arrange or share in wrong-doing for a day as for

an eternity. Goodness, on the contrary, may for certain high ends allow, not to say arrange, many things for a season, when it would be impossible for it to contemplate the same for eternity. One of the reasons, indeed, actually essential to its permitting of some supposed arrangement, may just be the temporal and provisional character of the same. Now it can avail nothing to plead that it might be necessary for Goodness to submit to the fact of everlasting suffering, on the ground that Justice demanded it, and therefore Goodness in yielding to the demand could never cease to be goodness. Suffice it to reply (1) That, while Justice *may* be conceived of as demanding the punishment of a sinner so long as he exists, it *cannot* be conceived of as demanding that he shall eternally exist in order to be punished. (2) And thus Goodness, in presiding over the arrangement, could always remove the occasion for such a demand. No creature, in short, has an eternity of its own; and it depends upon the pleasure of the Creator whether or not it shall have it from Him. And therefore, if His goodness forbids the maintaining in endless existence of a creature who can use that existence only in sinning, and can reap no fruit but of suffering—then the thing which it is so appalling to think of can never be.

Thus, without approaching the harassing problem of the harmony between the benevolence of an Almighty Being and His permission of evil, we are in a position to view, in their respective relation to the love of God, the two systems—of the actual destruction of the

unsaved on the one hand, and their endless sufferings on the other. And the result of the comparison will be this—that the difficulty of the desired reconciliation is infinitely greater in the one case than in the other. *Infinitely*, we say, in the strictest sense of the word. And that, because eternity is infinitely longer than any possible period. According to the one view, a portion of the human race is saved, and inherits a blessedness infinite in its amount, because boundless in duration—the other portion continuing unsaved, and inheriting a misery of the same amount, and that for the same reason. According to the other view, the good and happiness only are infinite, the evil and suffering finite. And thus it seems that when the whole sum shall have been made up of the sin and death which have accrued to mankind through the first Adam, whether in this world or the next—that sum will prove in the balances of Eternity as an absolute nothing when weighed against the life and blessedness which, through the Second Adam, have become the portion of the redeemed. And thus we can see one glorious harmony, at least, between Justice and Love, even in that most tremendous of all divine dealings—namely, in the closing act of the drama of ‘everlasting destruction.’ For, if we regard that as the deed of Justice, we can still see Love as looking on, and can hear the shout of its Amen, as the last agony of the lost is breathed out. And thus, as Hell fills up its witness to the truth that “Our God is a consuming Fire,”—there will be even in that a strange harmony with the glorious counterpart—that



"GOD IS LOVE." And then, if we happily are there to see, we shall behold with these eyes the sublime spectacle of an obedient universe, purely loving and purely loved by its glorious Sovereign. In the meantime, as we bow before that throne which still to us seems obscure through the very brightness of its purity, we can bless God that the black cloud of a judgment to endless woe is to be found only among the dark visions of men, not on the pure brow of the Eternal.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

WE have now had occasion to review most of the objections commonly urged against the great doctrine that death, in the sense of destruction, is the wages of sin, and the doom of the unsaved. We need hardly say how much these derive their force from a mere sentiment or feeling against the doctrine; and yet how violently the charge of anything like sentimental objections will be repudiated. It is always so; and therefore may be expected here. We set up certain sentiments of our own as the embodiment of all that is grand in humanity, or the infallible premonition of whatever is desirable in Revelation; and, floating away in these, we see man or truth through the brilliant mist. But now for one or two objections of a more palpable kind.

(1) It is very commonly urged that *our doctrine must seriously impair the action of the great motive of fear* which God has implanted in us. And then we are told, in language that need not be repeated, how much the fear of an endless hell has done for men, and how little good can be expected without it. Now there is no

doubt that a family of wayward children might be restrained from some bad things by a misreport of the designs of a very excellent father—such a misreport as would make his heart shudder at the very thought that he could ever be guilty of the cruelty and injustice imputed to him. There might even arise from the correcting of the report an injurious reaction on the minds of the undutiful children. So it is that a reaction from excessive tyranny and injustice has always an element of danger in it. Still the question in all such matters is—What is right? what is true? and that as much in a divine as in a human case. Enough for us to know that “Thus saith the Lord,” be that what it may—and that His truth, not man’s mistake, was what stirred the world in the early gospel day. Reaction there may be—we do not doubt it. But who is responsible for that? It is ours to wash our hands of it all, and to urge upon men that they flee from the wrath to come—even “wrath to the uttermost”—“abiding on them”—the terrible consummation of it being “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.”

On the other hand—whatever the ill effects of that reaction which this controversy may occasion, we can confidently expect a very different result as well. For there is another tale to be told besides the wholesome dread of endless torments. There is the wide-spread fearlessness as to punishment at all, because of the utter disbelief that God ever *will* inflict everlasting suffering on His creatures. And, more than that, there

is the positive abhorrence entertained towards the Bible and its Author, as engendered or fostered by the belief that they are responsible for the dogma which has awakened the repugnance. If, by speaking and writing the truth, aught can be done to mitigate so disastrous an evil, our humble endeavour may not be in vain.

(2) Another objection is this—*What good reason can there be for the raising the bodies of the Christless dead with no other view than to destroy them?* Now suppose we were to ask—What good reason can there be for doing this with no view but to torment them eternally?—the answer of course would be—That is not the view with which they are raised; the object is simply to render to them the due reward for the deeds done in this life. Even so do we answer. And it will be hard to show, that when the two views of retribution are compared, there lies against ours an antecedent objection, on this ground, sufficient to extinguish it.

And now taking the case on its own merits, there may be the best of reasons why He who judges *as* THE SON OF MAN—that is to say, in virtue of His peculiar humanity—should go so far as to reinvest with the lost part of *their* humanity the *souls* which He has to judge. But on the other hand, that is no reason—and possibly there *may be* none—why, because He has raised, He should maintain imperishable, these bodies in all the evil and woe of a godless state. Thus, for example, it may for various reasons be fit to sustain in life a

criminal after the passing of the fatal sentence; and yet this temporary suspension of the penalty, and provisional support of the condemned, can furnish no reason at all for letting him run out the natural course of his life in a dungeon. And so, if the Son of Man has full authority and power over all flesh and all human things, why should He not raise the unsaved dead—not as the harvest consequent upon Himself the first-fruits—but as the Judge who can allow *no part* to escape of that which had impenitently arrayed itself against the government of God? He had allowed them to die, because for sufficient reasons “it is appointed unto men once to die.” But now as the sentence against the actual *human being* has not been exhausted, either by the dying of the body or the suffering of the disembodied soul—there remains nothing but a reconstruction of the body, in order to the full execution of the sentence by which both the directing soul and the instrumental body have to be destroyed in hell. For what if there be no place short of that suitable for the destruction of either?

Thus, though we should admit—which for various weighty reasons we cannot do—that the statement, “So in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Cor. xv. 22), embraces the unsaved as well as the saved<sup>1</sup>—this

<sup>1</sup> The reasons for holding that the Apostle refers in that chapter to the resurrection of believers only are such as these: (1) The death of believers only can be designed by the ‘sleeping’ spoken of in verse 20. (2) The individuals said to be raised are “*they that are Christ’s.*” (3) This cannot apply to any portion of His enemies—*all of whom He is to “put under His feet.”* (4) The corruptible putting on incorrup-

would prove nothing as to the eternal duration of the bodies of the lost.

(3) Another objection to our view is derived from *the reversal*, as is assumed, *of the original sentence passed on Adam*. For, according to that sentence, he must, it is argued, have died on the day of his transgression; nor is it conceivable that his life was prolonged on any other ground than that of the mercy and redemption announced to him; hence the existence of his posterity; hence immortality to them as the result of immortality restored to him.

Now we deny again, as we have done already, that the sentence—"In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die"—fairly meant that man's entire life should be actually withdrawn on that very day.<sup>3</sup> But suppose that such is the meaning—suppose that, in consequence of the new dispensation immediately introduced, Adam did not die on that day—suppose that he thus obtained a chance of redemption and immortality—and thus became the father of the human race—what then? What is there in all this to show the immortality of the race? Could not Adam be made to live for a thousand years without its following from that that he was to live for ever? Could not all of us receive through him a natural being, and, in conjunction with that, have an open door to immortality graciously

tion, and the mortal putting on immortality, can apply to believers only. And yet the Apostle is not by these terms *narrowing* the view already expressed.

<sup>3</sup> See chap. ii. above.

set before us, without the necessity of concluding that our mere birth made us immortal? Why not say at once that as the whole race, root and branch, was on the point of extinction in the person of the sentenced Adam, so the same race has in all its individuals now obtained an actual redemption and immortality in the spared Adam, or rather in that Second Adam through whom the supposed reprieve is conceived to have come? Such a view would be at least intelligible, and would want only one thing—namely, a foundation to rest on. But where shall we find that?

Do we profess to find it in the promise—"The Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent"—as if that amounted to an engagement so to defeat the devil's plot as to abolish the death incurred, and restore the immortality forfeited? Be it so, and yet the extent and specialty of the victory must be learned from other quarters. One thing however is plain—and that is, that *blessing*, and not curse, is the thing engaged for—redemption not punishment—a happy life not a naked existence, whether temporal or everlasting. And least of all surely does a promise so gracious contain in its bosom a seed which should find a portion of its development in the awful fact—of countless multitudes coming to spend their eternity, as the devil's captives, in the everlasting fire prepared for *him*. No—in so far as the serpent's head is bruised, the works of the devil are destroyed—his captives are delivered; and the conqueror, not the conquered, triumphs.

Or, are we—in proof of a universal immortality as

restored through Christ—pointed to the statement,—“As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”<sup>3</sup> (1 Cor. xv. 22.) Our answer will be found in what has been said already upon this passage as having no reference except to the saved. And, even granting

<sup>3</sup> Thus Warburton, *Divine Negation*, says—“Revelation teacheth that mankind lost the free gift of immortal life by the transgression of Adam, and from thence became mortal, and their existence confined to this life. Revelation likewise teacheth that the means which divine wisdom thought fit to employ in restoring man from death to his first state of immortality, was the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.”

Now what this leads to—in the absence of a universal restoration—is sufficiently plain. The following from a very different writer will bring out that.\* After pointing out that “the mere survival after death does not of itself seem on any physical or moral grounds to necessitate the perpetuation of the soul’s immortality”—he adds, “It is perfectly conceivable (though so many seem to have missed so simple a thought) that the soul of man may be naturally capacitated for immortality, and yet the work of Christ be absolutely necessary to bring that capacity into effect. . . . If any venture the wild theory of the soul’s necessary immortality, we may reply that the same scheme of creation which formed souls necessarily immortal may have required the death and resurrection of Christ as the sole condition of forming them with this property of inherent and essential eternity—so that still, though existing by absolute necessity, in Christ alone could they thus exist. . . .” Again, “He who, as in the text (Sermon on John viii. 51) is promised security from death for ever, is rescued from a fate far more terrible than annihilation, he is rescued from the miseries of death protracted into eternity. . . . But, oh, horrible thought! if all this tendency to the eternal, this longing for everlasting mansions, be to any of us but the prophetic twilight, the forecast shadow of unending darkness. Oh, agony insufferable! if the eternal life of Christ be but the guarantee of a death as everlasting as His everlasting life—if the prolongation of His divine existence be but the seal of that never-dying death which, by a dread union of opposites, seems described as protracting dissolution itself into immortality.”

\* See *Sermons*, by W. A. Butler, First Series, Sermon v.



its application to others, it is enough to observe that the raising from the dead would be a very different thing from the maintaining of any in an endless existence of suffering. For the one, as a thing fit in the extreme, we have already argued, though not from this text. As for the other, it is enough that the two things have no connection whatever.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THOUGHTS ON UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

LET us point out how, before accepting of such a belief, it is needful, in regard to various matters, to handle the Scripture.

We must believe, for example, that, when the chaff is spoken of as "burnt up with unquenchable fire," the meaning is that the fire will actually come to an end, without any consumption of the chaff—which, in fact, is not to be burnt up or consumed at all, either as regards its being, or its ultimate well-being—but only transformed, by means of the fire, into something agreeing as to nature with, however differing in name from, the 'wheat!' Thus "the unquenchable fire" comes to an end; while the chaff that is "burnt up" in it never ends!—unless we adopt the desperate expedient of maintaining, in spite of all Scripture usage,<sup>1</sup> that the chaff represents not *persons*, but *practices*. And so, in regard to the 'tares' which are separated from the wheat, and bound in bundles to be burnt up, we must believe that, instead of being *so burnt*, they are, in process of time,

<sup>1</sup> The references to the subject are as follows:—Job xxi. 18; Ps. i. 4; xxxv. 5; Isa. v. 24; xvii. 13; xxix. 5; xxxiii. 11; xli. 15; Jer. xxiii. 28; Dan. ii. 35; Hos. xiii. 3; Zeph. ii. 2.

to be plucked from the fire and associated with the wheat again! And the same method we must follow with the fruitless branches as "cast into the fire;"—and the worthless fish as "cast away." The 'casting away,' in all these cases, must differ, it seems, from everything of the kind commonly expressed by such language—inasmuch as, instead of a real rejection, it is only the preparation for a blessed ingathering! Then, as regards 'the house on the sand' whose fall seems so certainly to be its end, we must believe that it is after all to be raised from its ruins and to stand for eternity. So, the enemy of Christ who is 'ground to powder' by the falling upon him of the great foundation stone, and who is thus represented as irretrievably ruined, is yet to be healed after all, and brought to build upon that which had crushed him to dust. Thus Judas, of whom it is said that "it had been good for him never to have been born," is destined to have an 'age' of suffering swallowed up in an eternity of happiness;—while the impassable gulf between the "place of torment" and "Abraham's bosom" is, every moment, becoming narrower, with the certainty that, at the end of the age or ages, it will have disappeared for ever. And so, where we read that "their worm dieth not," we must take the meaning to be that the worm *will* die, and then its miserable victims will enter on their life of everlasting bliss!

Then, in regard to the vitally important word 'perish,' the demand made on us is peculiarly hard. We can understand how it means to lose one's being—and let

us allow that, by a certain license, it might mean to lose one's well-being—but to believe neither the one nor the other is difficult indeed.—“Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” The sentence seems final; and yet it is not! The words leave nothing behind; but the meaning does not correspond to the words!—“Fear Him who, after He hath killed, is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Now, we can understand and believe that, after the killing of the body, there can come a destroying of both body and soul; but we can neither understand, nor, without understanding it, believe that, after the destroying, there can come a restoring to good, boundless alike in amount and duration. Or, when told in tones so solemn, and in language so explicit and varied, about the losing of the soul—are we to understand the meaning to be that the soul is never really lost, but only reserved at the worst for endless purity and happiness? Is this the difference between him who gains and him who loses his soul—that, while the gainer never becomes a loser, the loser, after a time, becomes an everlasting gainer?

But of all things proposed for our belief in this matter there is none harder than what we are asked to accept as the meaning of the word ‘everlasting.’ For this, we are told, does not properly mean *that* at all—but only ‘*age-lasting*.’ How far that age extends is, of course, a minor consideration. Enough that a limit is set to it. Thus, ‘*everlasting* life’ comes to be the life which lasts for the period in question—the proof of its continuance *beyond* that being derivable from other sources—such as

the believer's connection with the living God, and the living Redeemer. It is even held by some, consistently enough no doubt, that 'the everlasting God' must be regarded in no other light—the fact of His proper eternity being always of course assumed, but never expressed even in language like this. The same may be said of all the cases in which *aión* under any form is supposed to denote eternity. For there is equal reason, and, it may be added, disposition also, to apply such expressions in the same way.<sup>3</sup>

It may be well just to note here some of the consequences of such a view. It follows, then, that there is in all the Bible *no actual intimation of a true eternity of life and glory* through Christ. Such an eternity is to be taken for granted, indeed; but it is not expressed, not revealed—the expressions which seem to point to it really referring to a certain limited period which is to succeed the present temporal state! Thus, even in a passage where time and eternity seem expressly con-

<sup>3</sup> Thus we find it stated in a popular work—"It will, I think, be found that the adjective *αιώνιος*, whether applied to life, punishment, redemption, covenant, times, or even God Himself, is always connected with remedial labour, and with the idea of 'ages' or periods in which God is working to meet and correct some awful fall. . . . The aeonial God, that is (if I err not) the God who works through these ages. . . . Aeonial or eternal life is not, as so many think, the living on and on for ever and ever. It is rather, as our Lord defines it, a life the distinctive peculiarity of which is that it has to do with a Saviour, and so is part of a universal plan. . . . The word 'aeonial' cannot mean strictly never-ending. Nor does this affect the true eternity of bliss of God's elect, or of the redeemed who are brought back to live in God's life, of whom it is said, 'Neither can they die any more;' for this depends on a participation in the divine nature," &c. —JUKES on *The Restitution of all Things*, pp. 60-64.

trasted, it is not so—the statement there made being really this, “The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are *age-lasting*.” The age may be long, indeed; but it too has its term—all beyond that being unrevealed, unsuggested. Life *is* to be everlasting; the glory accruing to God from creation unfallen or redeemed *is* to be everlasting; but of this no actual statement is to be found in the Bible. It is simply left to us to assume it, or infer it, and so believe it!

But now, this ‘age,’ however protracted, is just *nothing* compared to *eternity*;—it is a mere interlude between the present and the eternal state; and yet of that eternal state nothing is said in these descriptions! Thus, when we are told of God giving His Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have *everlasting* life, the meaning will be that the believer is to enjoy his ‘age-lasting’ life—nothing being *said* of anything beyond; while the unbeliever, after losing the whole of the ‘age-lasting’ life enjoyed by the other, shall then enter upon a life common to the saved and the lost—that is, the true *everlasting* life, as assumed or inferred from one source or other, but nowhere held forth in the Bible! So when it is said, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him”—the contrast will be, not as we should have naturally supposed, between having life for ever, and losing it altogether; but between the having it and wanting it during a certain age, with an equal certainty of possessing it at the end of that ‘age,’ and during the

eternity that follows. And thus the long-continued but *temporary* difference between the lot of the saved and the unsaved is the only thing that is ever alluded to in any of these descriptions—while of the truly *everlasting agreement* in store for them there is no hint given! The difference which is temporary is spoken of as if it were everlasting; the agreement which is everlasting is not spoken of at all! So when our Lord says, “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death,” His meaning will be that the true disciple shall not see it during the ‘age;’—while, at the end of the ‘age’ there will be no more death for any one. In like manner, when he says of the man who blasphemes against the Holy Ghost that he hath *never* forgiveness—the meaning must be either that, at the end of this age, he *has forgiveness*—or that, in order to the happiness destined for him, he has no need of it!

Are we to believe, then, that the blessed Jesus can thus speak of the future of the lost—without letting in upon it one ray of hope from that eternal sun which He knew should yet burst out from behind the cloud of their outer darkness? Nay more, that He could actually announce what His own sentence upon them was to be—“Depart, ye cursed”—as *apparently* a sentence of absolute, unconditional separation from God—while all the time these were the souls that He had not only bought with His blood, but had engaged actually to restore to happiness and to God? Without Him they must have been for ever wretched. Through Him they are to be for ever blessed—*so soon as that terrible age of*

*vengeance is past!* And now He is anticipating the glorious consummation; and His heart is overleaping the gulf, and yearning for their deliverance; and His meaning is nothing worse than to consign them to a place of correction and purification—while yet He absolutely “denies them before His Father,” declaring that He never knew them, and bidding them depart from Him as workers of iniquity! Is it possible? Can this be that Jesus who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever”—who yet on one day seems so little to know what He Himself was on some past, or will be on some future day?

And what may be the ground on which we are asked to accept such incongruities as these? What is it that is to bridge over the impassable gulf—and to quench the unquenchable fire—and to kill the worm that dieth not—and to change the consumed tares and chaff into wheat—and to clear the man to whom is no forgiveness—and to destroy ‘everlasting’ destruction, so that it shall be the end neither of the being, nor of the well-being of those that perish—and, finally, to bring back to His bosom those whom the Saviour-Judge has bid depart from Him as accursed? What is to effect all this?—Let us see.

We are told, for example, that Adam was made in the image of God, and in the great genealogy appears as “the son of God” (Luke iii. 38), the same dignity necessarily descending to his posterity, whatever temporary disturbance may arise as to the enjoyment of the title. Now, Adam was doubtless brought into being as the



son of God. But, putting aside all theory as to the necessary perpetuity of such a state,—what avails it to us, if *we* be “children of disobedience,” and “of wrath”—if to some of us, at least, it be said—“Ye are of your father the devil;”—if, in short, we “become sons of God” now, only by “receiving Him” whom the Father has sent to save; and if, like Adam, who had nothing but his own likeness to convey, we too have lost, till by a new birth it be restored, the image of our God? (John i. 12; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10.)

Again, if the original endowing of Adam with such a character, and such a dignity, did not stand in the way of his exposure to that everlasting misery which—*apart from redemption*—is assumed by many, at least, on whose belief we are now commenting, to be the inevitable doom of an immortal sinner, what bar can such a sonship offer to the very awful, but still mitigated, doom of a real ‘destruction?’

Or, the Son of God, we are told, by taking on Him our nature, has, as a second Adam, effected an actual, a universal redemption—has arranged for an actual, a universal restoration of that nature—thus reinstating all without exception in the sonship lost through the first Adam—putting into the mouth of all alike the sweet words, ‘Our Father,’ and that too as expressive not only of right disposition, but of actual position. And all this is announced as a self-evident truth, belonging to the department of Christian feeling or intuition—so much so that there must be some serious defect, mental or moral, about those who fail so to recognize it; while some

go so far as to declare that the whole of their theology is summed up in the words, 'Our Father.'

Now all this may be very pleasant and very plausible. But is it true? Is it a human thought, or a divine doctrine? Prove that man, as man, is now through redemption actually a son of God, and then you prove not only unconditional immortality, but universal restoration too. Show, on the other hand, that to be 'lost' is to be destroyed without remedy; and universal sonship at once becomes a dream. Meanwhile, it is a question of the last moment—Is such sonship a fiction or a fact? And what answer is it to quote the returning prodigal as saying, "I will arise and go to my Father"?—or our Lord as teaching the two precious words to His *disciples*, when—in spite of the duty and joy of possessing the heart of a son—the express doctrine of Scripture is, "As many as received Him, to *them* gave He power to *become the sons of God*;"—"As many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they* are the sons of God;"—"Ye are all the children of God *by faith* in Christ Jesus." And surely it is not of the mere human mass, but of the regenerate company that it is said—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God." (Rom. viii. 14; Gal. iii. 26; 1 John iii. 1, 2.)

And is it nothing to our purpose that *sonship* and *heirship* are described as inseparable? "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ,"

(Rom. viii. 17.) Are we able to believe that the possession of such an inheritance can consist with any possible form of 'everlasting destruction'? If then, the announcement of such a destruction be a fact, must not the idea of universal sonship be a fiction? And, on the other hand, does not the utter negative put by the Scripture on such sonship dissipate for ever the dream of a corresponding restoration? It is easy, of course, to ask us to believe; and easy to blame or pity us for not believing; but there is on the other hand an irresistible disposition to ask for evidence. And, if evidence could be got, where might we expect it, if not in the sentiments or statements of the Son of man Himself? But does it appear there? Does it seem as if He anticipated, after an age of separation, that eternity of communion with the brotherhood of a universally redeemed humanity, which, by the supposition, must have been ever in His mind?—a communion which was to afford, in short, that consummation which would exceed in glory all the previous displays of mercy, as far as the eternal exceeds the temporary? He yearned over Jerusalem. He would fain have gathered her children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings; and He freely proclaimed the yearning. How, then, did He so strangely shut up from human sight and sympathy the ineffable satisfaction with which He must have contemplated that blessed reunion with His ransomed and restored brethren which was to succeed all their ignorant or malicious rejection of Him on earth? Or, if He ever did express such sentiments, where is

the record of it? Need we say how weak it must ever be to dig in some corner of the Scripture field for some gem of thought which, if taken alone, might seem to sparkle with the light of a universal restoration; and all the while make no account of that funeral pall which the Saviour's own hands have thrown over the whole futurity of the lost?

Thus, for example, what purpose can it serve, in the face of all the direct teaching of the Saviour and His apostles, to tell us that the presenting of the first-fruits, whether in the Old Testament or in the New (James i. 18), implies an ingathering of the harvest of universal humanity? The language is grand, but what substance is there in it? Is it the *figure* that is relied on for such a conclusion? But the figure never carried such a meaning as this with it. The meaning of all such language manifestly is, that a full harvest-time is coming, when the entire field shall be covered with fruit for the gladdening of the owner;—but, about the fruit that may have rotted, or been blasted, or in any way have perished, between seed time and harvest—or about the tares, that may have sprung up alongside the wheat—such language intimates nothing. Then, as to “the first-fruits of His creatures” the *present* is the time for the making up of such from those who are “begotten again” now. The full harvest will be when “the earth shall yield her increase,” when “men shall be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call Him blessed”—when the returning Lord “shall gather the wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

Or, perhaps we are referred to the gracious engagement—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John xii. 32.) But surely He meant by this nothing else than that actual drawing which takes place *now*—that *present* coming to Him of which He was constantly speaking. And when He announced that, as the Crucified One, He would draw "all men," He could only mean that there would be in His Cross a perfect adaptation to that end; *or* that it should soon appear that He could and would draw men of all kinds and characters without distinction; *or* that as King over all the earth He would actually draw all without exception. But, in whatever respect it was to be accomplished, the 'drawing' announced could be nothing else than the bringing of men into that spiritual condition which had just been described—"He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour." The 'drawing,' in short, in so far as it brings men into a new spiritual state, can on no sound principle be regarded as embracing any but those who yield to it now. Nor could any who heard those solemn warnings which followed the engagement to 'draw' (vv. 35-50) have for a moment imagined our Lord to mean that, however men might resist Him here, yet they should be all equally gathered into His bosom hereafter.

Or, are we reminded of the divine purpose "to gather *together* (or sum up) all things in Christ—both which

are in heaven, and which are on earth"? (Eph. i. 10.) But there is nothing here about those who have passed from earth without passing into heaven—not even a shadow of opposition to the plain doctrine of the Epistle, that there is only one way for man of reconciliation and renewal (ch. ii. iv.), with nothing but "the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." (v. 6.) And as little are we told when the grand result is to be effected. Enough that it belongs to the future. And that future (according to our doctrine) embraces the period when nothing of humanity shall remain, except what belongs to the body of Christ.

Need anything more be said of the other expression, on which so much weight is frequently laid, in the writings of the same Apostle—"That by Him He might reconcile all things unto (or *for*) Himself"<sup>3</sup>—whether they be things in earth or things in heaven?" (Col. i. 20.) For here, again, the context supplies the same statement regarding the final doom of the impenitent. (iii. 6.) Surely it is hard from this to write down Paul as an advocate for 'universal restoration.'

Nor is it possible to make anything more of such a statement as this—"Who willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. ii. 4.) For, is it not plain that the being 'saved' and the 'coming to the knowledge of the truth' are exactly co-extensive? And is it less certain, according to the doctrine of Paul, that the only season for coming to such knowledge is the present? It is only now, he

<sup>3</sup> *ὅτι αὐτοῦ εἰς αὐτὸν*, as in v. 16.

teaches, that sinners are saved—and that, by “believing on Christ Jesus to everlasting life.” (i. 15, 16.) Does any one still ask—Why, then, say that God *willeth* all men to be saved, if they never are? But does not God *will* all men to love Him, and that now?—while yet they do not. Does He not *will* that all should repent, and repent now?—and yet they do not. Yes, does He not *will* that they should come to the knowledge of the truth—even now—and so be saved now? and yet it does not take place. Thus it is no question of *time* at all—but entirely of *principle*. And the principle must be false which can extract the result of a universal future restoration from a sentence which would, far more naturally and distinctly, yield the result of a universal present love, faith, repentance—that is to say, a universal salvation from sin as accepted and enjoyed now. What, in short, can we extract from such statements other than what appears so plainly in the one—“How often would I have gathered thy children . . . and ye would not?”

Or, are we reminded that God is “the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe”? (1 Tim. iv. 10.) Such arguing, I answer, becomes those only who attend to the sound rather than to the sense of words.—“We labour and suffer reproach,” is the sentiment, “because we trust in the LIVING GOD, who is the Saviour (*Preserver*) of all men—specially of those that believe.” But what does this mean, except that He makes His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the evil and the good—while, in a very peculiar sense, He delivers His

believing ones—attending specially to the wants of those who seek first the kingdom of God—making all things work together for good to those that love Him?

Or, are we referred to the fifth chapter of Romans for a proof of universal restoration? We shall only answer—Can you read that chapter, and really believe that Paul knows anything of an *actual* salvation, in any other way than by faith, for those who have had Christ preached to them? *Actual* salvation, we say—for that is our whole question now. As to a *provisional* salvation, that is another matter, and not affecting our enquiry. But if the *actual* salvation comes only through faith, then certainly no room is left for it *at the end of the supposed period of retribution*. For, however such a restoration may be supposed to be alluded to in some passages, there is not certainly in any of them a hint as to the existence of faith, or repentance, or any gracious act, on the part of those who, dying in unbelief, are represented as perishing.

Or, is it pressed upon us, that GOD IS LOVE? It is of all truths the most sublime. And yet, with all its certainty, it has not precluded either the mystery of sin, or the misery which to this day has attended, or is yet to attend it. Most probably *we* should have pronounced that no such state of things could ever have obtained under the rule of such a God. And we should have been mistaken. But it will be no mistake if we learn caution now, and abstain from all theorizing as to a necessity for some supposed action of divine love, because it seems to us that a contrary action would not



be reconcilable with it. It is easy to say that the love of God is a depth deeper than hell, and—from the principle thus assumed or rather the figure thus employed—to draw our own conclusions. But it would be safer and more becoming to adjust our views to God's own revelation of His love and its saving action. How far, indeed, we can intelligently and cordially enter into this revelation, while believing in the certainty of everlasting torment for an inconceivable multitude of the sinners of a day—that is a different matter. But what is there, on the other hand, to conflict with the love of God in the spectacle of His redeemed children as gathered around Him, and rejoicing in the immortality which, forfeited by all, is now restored to *them* under the glorious aspect of LIFE ETERNAL?

Again, is it offered to us as an argument for 'restoration,' that "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy (*abolish*) the works of the devil"? (1 John iii. 8.) True; but though He does this, whenever He delivers a soul from the tyranny of Satan, that does not hinder the present continuance and action of the "children of the devil." (v. 10.) And what is to be the final destiny of such must be learnt elsewhere than from passages like this.

Or, does any one venture to build upon such an expression as—"The times of restitution of all things"? (Acts iii. 21.) But that is plainly an event of the present, not of the future world. What else, in short, as the burden of so many prophecies can it signify, except that millennial state when the groanings of creation

shall have ceased, because the rightful Sovereign has come to reign—the Prince of Peace, “whom the heavens must receive until the time” of His full dominion—the time of His *restoring again* the kingdom to Israel?<sup>3</sup>

And, if so little can be extracted from such a sentence as this, can more be made out of the statement—“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord”? (Phil. ii. 10, 11.) For surely it is possible to understand this without reference to lost souls; or, at least, without assuming their ‘restoration,’ so long as there can be a bowing and confessing by compulsion as well as by choice—a homage of devils as well as of angels—of chained captives as well as of triumphant friend. And how, in fact, can we suppose that a writer, who had just spoken of the ‘perdition’ of unbelievers, and was about to add, “Their end is destruction,” should now actually teach ‘restoration’ by such language as this? Did he, in so speaking, leave room for the idea that their end—or rather their unending state—should after all be, not ‘destruction,’ but ‘redemption’? (i. 28; iii. 19.)

Once more, we are reminded that “the last enemy, death, shall be destroyed.” (1 Cor. xv. 26.) Now this single expression, we admit, might fairly *consist* with a ‘universal restoration’ *if otherwise taught*. But it can never establish it, in the face of all that so decisively contradicts it. To this, however, we shall return in the

<sup>3</sup> It is impossible to overlook the connection as it is original between ‘restitution,’ and ‘restoring again.’

following chapter. Meanwhile, in connection with this, we call attention to an argument stranger perhaps than any of the preceding. For it has been taught that "the second death" itself actually implies and indicates a second and eternal life—on the assumed principle that death always means a ceasing to live in one's present state, and a *coming to live in the opposite*. And thus, as the first death is considered to have been a dying to God in order to a living in sin, so "the second death" must be regarded as a dying to sin, *in order to a living to God!*<sup>4</sup> A good cause, doubtless, is often supported by bad arguments. But some perhaps may be inclined to greater caution in regard to 'universal restoration' when they see it thus argued for. And yet, extraordinary as the argument is, it is hard to conceive how the Scripture statements can, with less of violence, be forced into consistency with a belief so opposed to them.

<sup>4</sup> "The 'second death' so far from being, as some think, the hopeless shutting up of man for ever in the curse of disobedience, will, if I err not, be God's way to free those who in no other way than by such a death can be delivered out of the dark world, whose life they live in. . . . The ungodly have not died to sin. At the death of the body, therefore, and still more when they are raised to judgment, because their spirit yet lives, they are still within the torments of that dark and fiery world, the life of which has been and is the life of their spirit. To get out of this world there is but one way—death; not the first, for that is past, but the second death."—JUKES, as above, p. 87.

Again, "Death to a spirit is only exchanging one life for another, and so passing out of one spirit-world into another . . . . What to the lost must the second death be? What, I ask, is any death but separation from the life and world which up to that death has been lived in?"—*Letter to the Rainbow*, July, 1869.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## GOD ALL IN ALL.

1 COR. xv. 28.

SUCH is the final adjustment of the mystery of God's Providence—the consummation of the work of His grace. It is the one end, achieved at last, for which the all-wise Contriver and all-powerful Controller had been working from the beginning. To understand the sublime expression employed to denote this, let us carefully attend to the context.

The Apostle has been treating of the *order* of the resurrection. "In Christ shall all be made alive (says he); but every man in his own order—Christ the first-fruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's at His coming." And such, as regards that matter, is all that he has to say. Thus is the subject of resurrection absolutely exhausted. There is something indeed to follow—"Then cometh the end." But of resurrection there is nothing. And why should we wonder? The field cannot produce more than first-fruits and harvest. And so—as the Apostle has nothing in view beyond the resurrection of Head and members—who, after the rising of "them that are Christ's," is left to follow? We are not forgetting the truth of a "first

resurrection"—nor the more limited aspect in which the 'coming' (*παρουσία*) is commonly presented. But if the Apostle chooses to sum up in a single statement the whole of resurrection—at the same time giving for the epoch of it the commencement only of the period during which the whole takes place—then we have no alternative but to accept his view, and take our stand upon it. That such *is* his view we maintain for the reasons now given. Elsewhere we may have notices of a first, and a second or general resurrection; but note here. The resurrection *here* is one—except it be that Christ's comes first—and afterwards that of them who are His.

But though resurrection is thus past, rebellion is not yet destroyed—all enemies are not yet trampled on. And not until this be done can Christ surrender the Mediatorial dominion committed to Him. As to how the subjugation in question is to be effected no hint is given. Over all that there hangs an impenetrable veil. For earth and its struggles are now over. Time—speaking after the ordinary standard—time with its pursuits and plots has run out; and it is the eternal world which furnishes the arena of the triumph now being achieved. Whether this triumph involves a conflict, or whether it follows upon the resistless and unresisted action of overwhelming might—we cannot tell. But that the foe still lives in mad rebellion—the same foe that planned all the mischief from the beginning—is sufficiently indicated. The name of that foe is "*All rule (or principality), all authority, and power*"

—the same undoubtedly as the “principalities and powers” that the dying Redeemer cast off (ὑπεκδυσάμενος) and “made a show of openly, triumphing over them in His cross” (Col. ii. 15)—the same as “the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world” which the Christian has to contend with now. (Eph. vi. 12.) These powers, then, have to be put down—*destroyed, abolished*.<sup>1</sup> And what can that mean? Yes, what can it mean? Already they have got their last victim within their grasp—already they have hurled their last dart at the army of the Conqueror—already is their whole opportunity for mischief, as we commonly regard it, gone—while they themselves are consigned to a dungeon which they can quit no more. Still, they are not yet abolished, or destroyed. For they now rage with a new fury in their old enmity against the Prince of peace, and revel in the vengeance permitted to them against their victims of mankind. And how, as long as they exist, can they cease so to rage and revel? But how on the other hand, after being abolished or destroyed, can they continue so to do?

Such, surely, is the view suggested by the language and the scene—when we take ‘destroy’ or ‘abolish’ at its real value, and consider both what must precede such an event, and what must be the import of the event *when occurring at the stage* here indicated *in the course of Providence*. It will be urged, no doubt, that this

<sup>1</sup> καταργῶ—The same word is rendered ‘destroyed’ (v. 26) in connection with ‘the last enemy.’ So Rom. vi. 6; 2 Thess. ii. 8; Heb. ii. 14. In 2 Tim. i. 10 we have ‘abolish.’

cannot be the meaning of the expression here—since it is synonymous with the ‘putting of enemies under the feet’—and that, it will be said, is a very different thing from such an abolition of them. Not at all different, we answer. Whatever be the meaning commonly attached to the language now, the Scriptural idea certainly was that such a treatment of enemies amounted to nothing less than an utter crushing or extinguishing of them. Thus, if we go to the cardinal passage (Ps. cx. 1), “Sit Thou on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool”—the only view presented by the psalm of the treatment of such amounts to no less than actual destruction. (See *vv.* 5, 6.) And the other references to the same practice bear out this view of the figure.<sup>2</sup> We should suppose, then, that such was the very design of the Father when He installed the Son at His right hand as universal King—committing to Him a sovereignty that never should end till He had made an end of the last of His enemies. And, excepting such a destruction, what remained to be done to “the principalities and powers” after the day when they were consigned to “the everlasting fire prepared for them”? What alternative, then, have we but to accept the language as really announcing all that it expresses? Have we not here, in short, the complete fulfilment of the design “that,

<sup>2</sup> Thus, when Joshua called the captains to put their feet upon the necks of the kings, that was only the prelude to the slaughter of them (Josh. x. 24-26.) And David when delivered from the hand of all his enemies says—“Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me.” (Ps. xviii. 40.)

through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil"? (Heb. ii. 14.) And how otherwise can the Son of God completely execute the purpose for which He was manifested (namely, that He might destroy the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8), than by destroying a worker who, while he lives, must work?

We come now to another and a very different view of the great work represented as still in progress under the regal administration of the Messiah—"The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed." Now, if we suppose a resurrection still to be accomplished at the epoch here specified, then of course the destruction of the last enemy will properly be regarded as effected in that. To the reasons however already given against such a view we may now add that death seems to be here spoken of under a *new aspect*—namely, as *the last enemy*—and one which has *never yet been abolished at all*. Whereas, on the other hand, if we take the abolition of death as signifying the last act of resurrection-work, there will be nothing peculiar either in the enemy or its destruction, but simply the repetition and consummation of that which took place at the 'coming.' For such reasons it seems to us that the 'death,' here called 'the last enemy,' can be no other than "THE SECOND DEATH." The whole scene, in short, as presented by the Apostle seems so to shut us out from every other view, and so shut us up to this, that we know not where else we can rest. And surely if the first death was both an enemy's work, and itself an enemy to those on whom it



wrought—much more is the second death an enemy, as that which inflames lost souls with the last desperate madness of enmity and rebellion against Him who has righteously consigned them to it. But this is not all. The second death may fairly be taken to embrace the whole condition of lost souls, that is to say, not only the righteous judgment which has bound them over to it; but their own unrighteous opposition to Him who never did them wrong. And thus will it be an enemy indeed—an enemy whose one breath is the deadliest malignity to the High and Holy One, and to all that concerns Him. Is it strange, then, if, in a picture displaying the abolition of that death, it should be spoken of as the last enemy? But how is this abolition to be effected? By the setting of its victims beyond the reach of its ravages—thus will the last enemy be abolished. *By what means*, then, shall such consummation be attained? Of two great acts either would secure it. The elevation of those victims to a place among the redeemed; or the sinking of them beneath the reach of hurt from the enemy. In a word the glorifying, or the extinguishing, of the agonized sufferers, would equally result in the destroying of this *enemy*. And to which of these does the Scripture point as the actual means to be employed? Can we doubt? Has not even the present passage taught us that the redeemed harvest is gathered in already at the period to which it refers?—and that there will then remain only enemies to be subdued—these consisting of certain principalities, authorities, powers, *and* the last enemy *death*. And is such the way

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in which the final redemption of lost myriads would be represented? Is it a taper like this, invisible in the overwhelming gloom, that would be held up before the straining eyes of humanity to point them to the radiance of a universal restoration? Vain imagination! Such cannot be the object of the passage. If the evidence be not sufficient to establish the connection with *the second death*—let us by all means reject it. But, as we value truth and divine authority, let us shrink from all such violence as would force this passage to become the mouthpiece of our own theories. Meanwhile, believing that the evidence is sufficient to support our view of the *last enemy*, we can see in that abolition of the second death which alone the Scripture sanctions—namely, the perfect destruction of all that stirs itself against God—the restoration and reign of a perfect submission and peace throughout the entire bounds of His universe. And this, we take it, is not a bad fulfilment of a revelation which announces—“Death—the last enemy, shall be destroyed.”

Another scene follows—and the drama of time and redemption is complete. Already is all subjected to the Son—and in such subjection is fulfilled the design of that special dominion over all that had been committed to Him. It only remains that the Son be subjected to Him from whom He received this dominion—the design of the whole being “that God may be ALL IN ALL.” Yes, all in all—everything everywhere and in every-one. The creature is the creature still—but God is *the all* to each one. The Blessed Trinity now supplies all

the wants—satisfies all the longings—fills up all the capacity of those multitudes, unfallen or redeemed, of whom the intelligent universe is now composed. Nowhere throughout creation is there another thought, another feeling about God than that He is the creature's ALL—the all for enjoyment—the all for pleasing and magnifying—*my* all, says each—*our* all shouts the universal chorus—THE ALL in *all*. Is this what the Apostle teaches? We believe, we must believe that it is. And why should we not? Putting aside the dream of restoration—what consummation can compare with it? We can see it to be all glorious, all worthy of God—and what more can we desire? Justice has triumphed, and Love has triumphed. Evil only has been crushed. Universal harmony has been restored. Does it seem to us as if everlasting discord between Himself and His creatures—or between creatures themselves—would better befit the arrangements of One who is a God of order and not of confusion? Is it possible that we can prefer the thought of countless masses of immortal rebels being launched on eternity with no harmony but this, that they abhor the very name of Him who made them—and have agreed to kick with all the energy of their undying natures against the foot that keeps them down in the everlasting darkness? And were these too few or too insignificant to be even remembered as an exception when Messiah's work and government were represented as consummated in the supremacy of God? No, we may not believe it, as we tremble at the divine word; but on the contrary we

must conclude that there is no exception of any kind anywhere to this, as the winding up of the great world-drama that God SHALL BE ALL IN ALL.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The following is a sample of the way in which the victory over evil and death is regarded by those who contend for the everlasting continuance of evil and suffering—"An awful balance then remains, a terrible residue to be placed to the account of the principle and power of evil; a residue so terrible as to urge us to exclaim, Is 'Death' indeed 'swallowed up in victory,' with such a tribute as this, of miserable spirits, paid into the gloomy treasury of 'the second death'? And we can only answer that, the boundless power of Christ being sufficiently manifested in the salvation of the blessed, His mysterious justice waives the prosecution of His conquest; while Death and Hades being (in the strong expressions of inspiration) 'cast into the lake of fire,' merged in their own horrible consummation, they are thereby declared to be limited for all eternity to that dark realm. Thus the eternity of torment, mysterious and terrible as it doubtless is, in nowise affects the universality of Christ's victory over the powers of evil. Christ Himself exalted to glory fixes the barriers to the energies of pain and death; annihilates not the foe, but banishes him; makes him the accursed minister of His own dread vengeance; and publicly manifests to the universe that if misery exist, it exists only as a permitted agent in the awful administration of God." [! !]—*Sermons* by W. A. BUTLER, First Series, p. 150.

END OF PART FIRST.



## Part III.

### HISTORICAL VIEW.

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#### CHAPTER I.

##### ANCIENT JEWISH OPINION AS TO FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

##### THE APOCRYPHA.

It is of consequence that we now attend to the subject here indicated. For it has been too much the habit to assume that the Jews, or at least the Pharisees, in New Testament times, held as a settled thing the doctrine of endless suffering. And from this is drawn an important inference as to the manner in which they would understand the Saviour's teaching. That such an assumption is entirely unwarranted we shall endeavour to show. There is little, indeed, if anything at all, to give colour to it, except certain statements of Josephus, and some phrases in the Talmud. To these we shall direct attention, after we have given as distinct a view as our space permits of the evidence on the other side.

Beginning, then, with the New Testament itself, which contains so many pregnant notices of Jewish belief—



what hint do we find that the Jews of that time held the belief ascribed to them? Not one. On the other hand, we find a young man of wealth and intelligence coming to our Lord with the enquiry—What good thing he should do, to inherit *eternal life*. Now what reason have we to say that such language in the mouth of this youth had any other meaning than it has regularly had in the mouth of other people—always, of course, excepting that New Testament usage now under discussion? What right have we to imagine that the young ruler by ‘eternal life’ meant simply ‘eternal blessedness’—believing all the time that ‘eternal life,’ in the ordinary sense of the words, was the common property of all, irrespectively of aught done to secure it? We may believe—and think we have good reason for doing so—that our Lord uses the same expression in a sense so peculiar. But what reason have we for thinking that the young ruler so employed it? For it was as a Jew that he made the enquiry; and it is most certain that a question as to the obtaining of life, asked in the Old Testament sense, would simply refer to the prolongation of natural life, with prosperity for its assumed accompaniment. Most reasonably, then, we conclude that when one trained in such a school passes on from natural to eternal life, he looks now to the obtaining of an existence that shall be, not merely long, but endless—with the accompaniment of a proportionably enhanced prosperity. And to show how prominent the element of endless life, in the sense of endless existence, as a thing peculiar to the righteous, was to

devout Jews of that day, we have simply to recall the ready answer of the Scribe—"Master, Thou hast well said"—after our Lord had silenced the Sadducees by His assertion of immortality as peculiar to God's children—"Neither can they die any more."

And then as to the belief in everlasting *misery*—how should the Jews have taken it up? The Old Testament had not taught it to them. How sparing that had been in regard to a formal teaching of immortality, even for the righteous, will be allowed by all. And yet the later Jews had deduced, and correctly, as will be admitted, that doctrine from their own Scriptures. To this they very commonly joined the resurrection of the dead. Seeing also clear intimations of the existence of the wicked in the coming state, they had, more or less distinctly, associated the perdition announced by their Scriptures with a punishment involving much of shame and suffering. But, as to endless torment, where were they to learn it? They had, indeed, read of fire unquenchable; but the meaning always was, that no human effort could hinder it from doing its work of consumption.<sup>1</sup> They had read of certain in regard to whom "the worm should not die, nor the fire be quenched." But it was the *carcasses* of the men that should be the victims of the vengeance threatened. And the object of horror was to be some spectacle outside the walls of Jerusalem—not a scene in the eternal world. Where, then, were they to learn the doctrine in question? The mythology, and to some

<sup>1</sup> See above, page 17.



extent the philosophy, of the Greeks would have furnished them with the idea in regard to certain very notorious sinners—incorrigible transgressors as they were counted—parricides and the like—who were to be delivered over to such suffering. But to the honour of the Jews be it said that—whatever their own views may have been—they did not accept on this point those of their more intellectual neighbours. They believed in that bodily resurrection which was abhorrent to the Greeks, and contented themselves with a very skilful development of Old Testament representations in regard to the condition of souls.

What the ordinary belief of the Jews was, not long before the appearance of our Lord among them, we may learn with sufficient accuracy from their Apocryphal books.

Of these one is content with the announcement that "The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms." (Ecclus. vii. 17.) Another says, "Woe to the nations that rise up against my kindred! The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall feel them and weep for ever." (Judith xvi. 17.) This last expression will not be overrated by any one who has marked its ordinary application in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Again, we read of "being raised up to everlasting life;" of "having no resurrection to life;" of "dying after short pain, under God's covenant of everlasting life;" while others receive "just punishment for their

<sup>2</sup> See above, page 16.

pride, not escaping the hand of the Almighty, dead or alive." (2 Macc. vii. 9, 14, 36; vi. 26; xii. 43-45.)

From these scattered notices we come to the express teaching on the subject contained in two of the Apocryphal books. In one of these, *Esdras* ii., written, as we may assume, in the half century B.C., we find the following:—

(a) *Future retribution*.—"What profit is it now to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment?" "We considered not that we should begin to suffer for it after death." (vii. 47, 56.)

"They that have cast them away shall despitefully dwell in torments." "They must know repentance after death by pain." (ix. 9, 12.)

"After death shall the judgment come, when we shall live again; and then shall the name of the righteous be manifested, and the works of the ungodly shall be declared." (xiv. 35.)

(b) *Immortality*.—"The day of doom shall be the end of this time, and the beginning of the immortality for to come, wherein corruption is past." "What profit is it, if there be promised to us an immortal time, whereas we have done the works that bring death?" . . . "For this is the life whereof Moses spake unto the people, saying, Choose thee life that thou mayest live." (vii. 43, 49, 59.)

(c) *Destruction*.—Now it is to be observed that throughout the book, where the meaning is quite unambiguous, the words 'destruction' and 'perish' are freely used to denote the 'bringing' or 'coming to an end'—just as we have found to be the case in the Old and New Testaments. And with this the writer joins, in the most natural way possible, the notices with which

we are concerned. Thus, in one sentence, we find the "ungodly perishing;" while in almost the next we read, "There be many that perish *in this life*." (vii. 17, 20.) So, whether it be in regard to punishment here or hereafter, it is counted sufficient to say that the Lord "delivers to death and *destruction*." (xv. 26, 49.)

We now ask that the following extracts be well considered—whether as bearing upon Jewish belief or phraseology.

"As the husbandman soweth much seed upon the ground, and planteth many trees, and yet the thing that is sown good in his season cometh not up, neither doth all that is planted take root; *even so* is it of those that are sown in this world; they shall not all be saved. . . Like as the husbandman's seed *perisheth* if it come not up . . . *even so perisheth* man also, which is formed by thy hand, and is called thine own image . . . he is likened to the husbandman's seed. . . Things present are for the present, and things to come *for such as be to come*. . . Sorrows are past, and in the end is shown the treasure of immortality. And, therefore, ask thou no more questions concerning the multitude of them that *perish*. . . It was not His will that man *should come to nought*."

So we read in the 8th chapter; and how can we but compare with all this the other expressions in the same chapter so evidently meaning the same thing:

"The Most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few. . . There be many created, but few shall be saved." (rv. 1, 3, 41, 43, 44, 46, 54, 55, 59.)

See again how the author insists upon and illustrates 'destruction,' representing it as 'punishment,' and as connected with suffering:

"They shall dwell in torments. . . . They shall know repentance by pain" (he had just said); and then—"Be not thou curious how and when the ungodly shall be punished; but enquire how the righteous shall be saved, whose the world is, and for whom the world is created. . . . I have said before, and now do speak, and will speak it also hereafter, that there be many more of them which *perish* than of them which shall be saved. Let the multitude *perish*, then, which was born in vain; and let my [chosen] grape be kept, and my plant; for with great labour have I made it perfect." (ix. 13, 15, 22.)

Thus the wicked are represented as *perishing*, and that in the course of punishment, and by the endurance of suffering. If it be asked more particularly in what sense they are supposed to perish, the answer is at hand—

"Our fathers which received the law kept it not; and though the fruit of Thy law *did not perish*, nor could it, for it was Thine; but they that received it *perished*, because they kept not the thing that was sown in them. And lo, it is a custom, when the ground hath received seed, or the sea a ship, or any vessel meat or drink, that that being *perished* which received it, the thing also which was cast into it doth *perish*; but with us it hath not been so; for we that have received the law *perish* by *sin*, and our heart also which received it. Notwithstanding *the law perisheth not*, but remaineth in his force." (ix. 32-37.)

And, once more, as distinctly showing the connection designed between *destruction*, as the thing *aimed at*, and *fire* as the *instrument for effecting it*, we read thus—

"My Son shall lay before them their evil thoughts, and the torments wherewith they shall begin to be tormented."

which are like unto a flame; and He shall *destroy* them without labour by the law which is *like unto fire*." (xiii. 38.)

To these extracts from the second book of Esdras, as given in the common Apocrypha, we add the following from chap. vi. of the Ethiopic version as translated by Archbishop Laurence, not found in the Latin version, but "bearing all the marks of genuineness, and quoted by Ambrose."<sup>3</sup>

"An evil heart seduces us into the way of death and path of perdition, removing from us henceforward the prospect of life. Nor is this the case with many, but with all who are born. . . . I shall rejoice in those few who shall live" (it had just been said that the righteous should never die), "because they will attain to my glory. Nor do I grieve on account of those who *perish*; for those now resemble a fire, are like a flame, and as smoke *burn, rage, and are extinguished*."

The *Wisdom of Solomon*.—This book expresses with the utmost distinctness the view that 'immortality' belongs only to the wise and good; while 'destruction' under some form or other—destruction as contrasted with immortality—is the destiny of others; and the value of such testimony is enhanced rather than diminished by the appearance of Alexandrian traces in the book. For it is plainly in spite of Greek influence and Alexandrian authorship that such views are presented, in regard to *bodily resurrection* and *conditional immortality*. Such, it seems, was the Jewish belief; and it was not easily quenched. We ask that the words here

<sup>3</sup> Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, 'Esdras 2nd book of.'

quoted from the original may be compared with the same expressions as used in the New Testament.

“Seek not death in the error of your life; and pull not upon yourselves *destruction* (ὀλεθρον) by the work of your own hands. For God made not death; neither hath He pleasure in the *destruction* of the living (ἀπωλεία ζώντων). For He created all things that they might have their being; and the generations of the world were healthful; and there is no poison of *destruction* (φάρμακον ὀλέθρου) in them, nor the kingdom of death upon the earth. For *righteousness is immortal*. But ungodly men, with their works and words, called it [destruction] to them.” (i. 12-16.)

The ungodly are then introduced expressing their own principles, as those of Epicurean pleasure in life and extinction at death; and as seeking to prove the fallacy of the contrary views of the righteous. After which it is said of them—

“As for the mysteries of God, they know them not; neither hoped they for the wages of righteousness, nor discerned a reward for blameless souls. For God *created man to be immortal* (ἐπ’ ἀφθαρσίᾳ), and made him to be an image of His own eternity (ᾧδιδότῃς).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, through envy of the devil, came death into the world; and they that hold of his side do find it. But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die; and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be *utter destruction*; but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of *immortality*. And having been a little chastised, they shall be greatly rewarded; for God proved them, and found them

<sup>4</sup> Another reading gives ἰδιότητις.

worthy for Himself. . . . They shall judge the nations, and their Lord shall reign for ever. . . . But the ungodly shall be punished according to their own imaginations. . . . For whoso despiseth wisdom he is miserable, and their hope is vain. . . . For glorious is the fruit of good labours; and the root of wisdom shall never fall away. . . . Horrible is the end of the unrighteous generation. (ii. iii.) Their memorial shall *perish* . . . and the floods shall cruelly *drown* them; but the righteous *live for evermore*. (Δίκαιοι δὲ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ζῶσιν, see iv. v.) For the giving heed to wisdom is the assurance of *incorruption* (ἀφθαρσίας), and incorruption maketh us near to God. (vi. 18, 19.) I myself also am a mortal man like to all. . . . And I called, and the Spirit of wisdom came to me; . . . for God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom (vii. 1, 7, 28); moreover, by the means of her, I *shall obtain immortality* (ἔξω δὲ αὐτὴν ἀθανασίαν). For to be allied to wisdom is *immortality*. (viii. 13, 17.) To know thee, O God, is perfect righteousness; yea, to know thy power is the *root of immortality*." (xv. 3.)

Such is the teaching of this striking book, on which we venture these two remarks. (1) The *immortality* spoken of is manifestly equivalent to that *living for evermore* which is so closely associated with it; and each of them is in the most express terms confined to the *righteous*. (2) The utter destruction spoken of on the previous page—as the thing which the ‘unwise’ take for the lot of the departed righteous—just as clearly indicates an entire end of them. And so, when the writer himself affirms the same of the unrighteous, it is beyond all question what he means. He uses the expressions ‘immortality’ and ‘destruction,’ in short,

just as our Bishop Butler does.<sup>5</sup> And such was the usage to which the hearers of our Lord and the readers of the New Testament had been all their lives accustomed, without one exception that has ever been pointed out.

If we now add that the word ἀπόλλυμι is constantly used throughout the book,<sup>6</sup> it is hardly needful to say that we find no other application of it than that which we meet with in ordinary writers.

<sup>5</sup> See above, page 166, note.

<sup>6</sup> See x. 3, 6; xi. 19; xii. 3, 12, 14.



## CHAPTER II.

ANCIENT JEWISH OPINION AS IN THE BOOK OF ENOCH, THE ASCENSION  
OF ISAIAH, THE TALMUD, AND JOSEPHUS.

FROM the common Apocrypha we turn to the lately discovered *Book of Enoch*,<sup>1</sup> which belongs, probably, like *Esdra*s ii., to the half century B.C., and contains references in great profusion to the future state.

Now let it be freely granted that if we are willing to rest with the mere sound of such words as 'for ever and ever,' without weighing their sense or connection, then nothing can be easier than to satisfy ourselves that the author of this book intended to teach the doctrine of 'everlasting sufferings.' But, if we will only take the proper means of ascertaining what he really meant by the expressions in question, we may find ourselves brought to a very different conclusion. The language referred to seems hardly, indeed, ever out of his mouth. But to say that he meant by it what we should mean is another thing altogether. Our firm conviction is this—'Enoch' (let us call him) teaches that a great many generations (70, he says, c. 10) should elapse before the

<sup>1</sup> An Ethiopic version, in which alone it is now preserved, was brought from Abyssinia by Bruce, and, in 1821, translated by Dr. Laurence. We quote from his 3rd edition in 1838; and from Dillman's "Das Buch Henoch übersetzt und erklärt." 1853.

day of judgment; after which there should be set up on this earth, for a period of countless ages, the kingdom of God, or the Messiah—during which the righteous should flourish in the perfection of bliss. Now, let us allow that he teaches an equal duration of torment for the wicked—although it appears extremely questionable whether he had one mind, or two, in regard to that—still, however long the supposed period of suffering, it has, according to him, a decided term; and, this once reached, the wicked shall be no more. As to the righteous—while there is no hint of their continuing longer, there is as little of their coming to an end. Let us allow him therefore the spiritual instinct to assume that these ages were, in regard to God's people, the entrance only upon their proper eternity. And how such a writer, with a mind so imaginative, and a style so exaggerated, could employ language as he does, will surprise us the less when we consider how differently the Old Testament itself, with its wonderful soberness, uses certain expressions from the way which we should venture on. With such usage the ordinary Jewish writers of those days had been familiar from their childhood; and we need not wonder if, at times, they allowed a license to their pens which has given rise to a belief that they intended to express what never entered their minds. And yet, as to the present case, we cannot but wonder that any thoughtful reader should ever have construed *Enoch's* high sounding sentences as meaning anything approaching to *everlasting suffering*.

We now give a few specimens of the doctrine—if

such it can be called—of the book, upon the points that concern us.

(a) *Destruction*.—"Woe to you that extend your ill-doing to your neighbour; for ye shall be killed in hell." (c. 99.)

"I will cast them like hay into the fire, and like lead into the water. Thus shall they burn in the presence of the righteous, and sink in the presence of the holy; nor shall a tenth part of them<sup>2</sup> be found." (c. 48.)

"Then shall the roots of iniquity be cut off; sinners perish by the sword; and blasphemers be annihilated everywhere." (c. 90.)

"Approach not the paths of evil, that ye may not perish. Ye are destined to the day of darkness and of the great judgment. This I declare to you, that He who created you will destroy you. He will not show you mercy, but will rejoice in your destruction. Nor hope that ye shall live, ye sinners; but ye shall go hence and die, because ye know no ransom-price, for ye are prepared for the day of the great judgment." (c. 93, 96.)

[What ambiguity could there be in such words to one brought up on the field of Old Testament language?]

"You who have laboured shall wait in these days till the evildoers are consumed, and the power of the guilty annihilated—shall wait till sin pass away; for their names shall be blotted out of the holy book; their seed shall be destroyed, and their spirits slain. They shall cry out and lament in the horrible waste, and in the bottomless fire shall they burn." (c. 99.)

The sentences that follow are the last in the book, and show the limit which the author attached to this misery, on the one hand, and to the glorious state of

<sup>2</sup> "No trace of them."—Dillman.

the righteous on the other. They show, in fact, how he intended his 'eternity' to be understood.

(b) '*Eternity*' and '*eternal life*.'—"The righteous shall shine *during unnumbered periods*. . . . Sinners shall cry out, beholding therein how they exist in splendour, and proceed forwards to the *days and periods prescribed for them*.<sup>3</sup> . . . The everlasting condemnation shall be far from you *for all the generations of the world*." (c. 104.)

"They shall hope for *eternal life*, and that each of them may live for 500 years." (c. 10.)

[How this is to be explained I do not profess to say—nor the following:]

"Righteousness and right shall men plant *for ever* with delight. Then shall all the saints give thanks, and live till they have begotten a thousand children; while the whole period of their youth and their sabbaths shall be completed in peace."—*Ib.*

[It seems, in fact, as if he were speaking of the *ages of the earth* as constituting the utmost extent of that eternity which he designed to picture. Thus he continues:]

"The earth shall be cleansed from all corruption, from every crime, from all suffering, from all punishment; neither will I again send a flood upon it *from generation to generation for ever*. Peace and equity shall associate with the sons of men all the days of the world, in every generation of it."—*Ib.*

<sup>3</sup> Dillman's version contains these expressions—"The wicked shall go there where days and times are written for them," and "their time of punishment is appointed to them."—*Ihre Straf-zeit ist ihnen bestimmt*.

[It is the same state of things which he describes in the following:]

"The saints shall exist in the light of the sun, and the elect in the light of everlasting life, the days of whose life shall never terminate, nor shall the days of the saints be numbered. There shall be light interminable, nor shall they enter upon the enumeration of time." (c. 56.)

"The whole account of the luminaries of heaven is *for ever*, according to every year of the world—*until a new be effected which shall be for ever*. This is the great luminary which He names the sun *for ever*." (c. 71.)

[That is to say, The *present* luminaries are *for ever*; and the one which *succeeds* them is also *for ever*. The following may throw light upon such language.]

"In the fifth week, the house of glory and dominion (Solomon's temple) shall be erected for ever and ever."<sup>4</sup>

From this we may pass to what our author speaks of as

(c) *Punishment for ever*.—"Into the darkness, and into the chains, and into the burning flame shall your spirit go at the great judgment; and the great judgment shall be for all generations, even to eternity." (c. 103.)<sup>5</sup>

"Then shall they be taken away into the lowest depths of the fire in torments, and in confinement shall they be shut up for ever. After this shall Azazyel, together with them, burn and perish. They shall be bound *until the consummation* of many<sup>6</sup> generations." (c. 10.)

The period of punishment is in one place said to be—

<sup>4</sup> "Für immer und ewig."—Dillman, c. 92.

<sup>5</sup> This should be compared with the quotations from the Talmud given below.

<sup>6</sup> "All."—Dillman.

"Until the infinite (10,000<sup>7</sup> worlds) number of the days of their crimes be completed." (c. 21.)

"And, as the inflammation of their bodies shall be great, so shall their spirits undergo a change for ever." (c. 66.)

Now this may seem formidable. And yet what is it, after all, but the wanderings of a heated spirit amid the figures and fancies of its own coining? The future state furnished precisely that scope for imagination which such a disposition craved. There everything was at the best dimly visible, as shrouded with the cloud of its own immensity. And yet even such a mind did not dare to make that future really (according to our mode of thinking) interminable. This, it seems, would have destroyed an essential element in the drama which the writer had proposed to himself, and which required that bounds should be set—in a future however remote—dimly even to the good, but distinctly to the misery which he undertook to delineate in the world to come. It may throw some light perhaps upon the mind and style of the author to know his exaggerated estimate of his own performance. "It is a mystery," says he, "that sinners, however else they transgress, will yet write out all my words correctly in their own languages, neither changing nor diminishing them." (c. 104.) A mystery indeed!

<sup>7</sup> This number was naturally a favourite one with such writers. Thus we find in Plato (*Phaedr.* § 61)—"Whoever passes his life justly obtains a better lot, but whoso unjustly, a worse one. For to the same place whence each soul comes, it does not return till the expiration of 10,000 years. For it does not recover its wings for so long a period, except it is the soul of a sincere lover of wisdom."

To conclude. Strong as the language of the preceding extracts is, we shall wonder less at it perhaps, when we see how much of it seems to be simply the expansion of some sentences in Scripture, which certainly do *not* express the idea of eternity. Thus we can feel at times as if the writer's anxiety was to make the utmost of "the everlasting generations" of Noah's covenant. We feel at other times as if he were playing upon the strings of the passage in which Isaiah uses, with reference to Edom, almost all the phrases by the use of which *Enoch* extends to boundless ages the sufferings of the wicked. "It shall not be quenched day nor night; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever, לְעוֹלָם; from generation to generation, דֹּרֹת לְדֹרֹת, it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever, לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד." (Isa. xxxiv. 10.) And, once more, we can often hear him, as it were, proclaiming the bliss of the righteous, in language which almost sounds like a studied paraphrase of such expressions as these—"They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, through generations of generations. . . . In His days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. His name shall endure for ever; His name shall be continued as long as the sun." (Psalm lxxii.) Or again, "His seed shall endure for ever, and His throne *as the sun* before me. It shall be established *for ever* as the moon, and *as the faithful witness* in heaven." (Psalm lxxxix.)

There is still another Apocryphal book worthy of a passing reference, "*The Ascension of Isaiah the Prophet*"

—a piece long lost, and at last translated from an Ethiopic version by Dr. Laurence, in 1819. It belongs most probably to the first century of our era (the translator says the end of Nero's reign); and is evidently the work of a Jewish Christian seeking to recommend the new faith to his own people. The sentences which now concern us have this peculiar interest, that they may thus be regarded as embodying ideas common at once to Jews and Christians of that age. And they have also this feature which we have met with already, and shall find still more frequently in the early Christian writers—namely, (a) the use of such terms as 'everlasting punishment' in connection with (b) the express doctrine of the *extinction of the wicked*. The sentences referred to are these.

(a) The king's son is sent to learn "truths relating to the eternal judgments and the torments of Gehenna—that place of everlasting punishment." (c. i. 3.)

(b) "There shall be in those days a resurrection and a judgment; while the Beloved shall cause to ascend from Him a fire to consume all the ungodly, who shall *be as if they had never been created*." (c. iv. 18.)

He speaks of "the angel who is in hell, as not yet having been hurled to utter perdition;" and then—"Thou shalt judge and *destroy* the principalities, angels, and gods of the world, *as well as the world which belongs to them*." (c. x. 8, 12.)

Now such a combination of ideas may not be according to the modern style. But if it was the style of the first Christian century, the lesson is important.

It may seem perhaps as if we had paid too much



attention to these very peculiar books. But it will be no loss, if we are thus rendered more familiar with the Jewish style of that period, and are enabled to enter with greater accuracy into those expressions of the Talmud which have been so confidently regarded as tantamount to the doctrine of endless sufferings. For, though that work is too late directly to show what was the belief of the Jews in New Testament times, still it will be contended that the indirect light reflected from it is of much importance. Be it so; and what comes of it at the most? Only this, as many believe, that the Talmud is in the habit of contemplating a future entirely in accordance with that which we have just seen represented—a future, especially of suffering, consisting of ages *indefinite, but not interminable*. If, on this subject, we quote a learned writer as saying, “There is no everlasting damnation according to the Talmud”<sup>a</sup>—that may be set down as merely his opinion, and an opinion as unsound as if the same authority should pronounce the same in regard to the Bible. But we may at least refer to him as quoting the Talmudic words—“Generations upon generations shall last the damnation of idolaters, apostates, traitors.” And when he interprets this as involving only “a temporary punishment even for the worst of sinners,” we cannot but believe—from the sense attached to such language in the Old Testament and the other Jewish writings—that his interpretation is correct. The author of “The Old Paths” was certainly well acquainted with the Talmud; and he had every

<sup>a</sup> Article on the Talmud.—*Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1867.

reason for quoting its strongest assertions on a subject where its language is but little measured; namely, when it treats of the doom of the enemies of Israel. And yet there is nothing in his quotations bearing with it the doctrine of endless suffering—nothing, in short, beyond, if equal to, the denunciations in the *Book of Enoch*.

“All Israel has a share in the world to come. . . . And also the pious of the nations have a share in the world to come. . . . But these are they who have no part in the world to come, but who are *cut off* and *perish*, and are condemned, on account of the greatness of their wickedness and sin, for ever, even for ever and ever,—the heretics, and the Epicureans, and the deniers of the law.” Again, “By the doing of these commandments he will be worthy of everlasting life. And let him be assured that the world to come is laid up for none but the righteous, and they are Israel. . . . But now the Holy One brings upon Israel the abundance of afflictions for no other reason than this, *that they may not be lost*. All the nations shall be *utterly destroyed*, but *they shall abide*.”<sup>9</sup>

Now what the Talmud meant by the expressions ‘utterly destroyed’ and ‘punishment of the nations’ will sufficiently appear from the following. We quote from a work,<sup>1</sup> the very object of which is to show the connection between ancient Jewish belief and the teaching of the New Testament. We find, then, that, according to the Talmud, there are three classes of persons to be judged.

“(1) The perfectly good, who at death are sealed for eternal life. (2) The perfectly bad, who are sealed for hell.

<sup>9</sup> Mc.Caul's *Old Paths*, i. ix.

<sup>1</sup> Gfroerer *das Jahrhundert des Heil's*, ii. p. 76, sq.

(3) The intermediate class, who fall into hell, and, after passing through the purifying fire, come out into heaven, according to Zechariah xiii. 9. In the same portion<sup>2</sup> of the Talmud there is some further detail as to the fate of the *bad*. The heretics, traitors, Epicureans, it is there said, people like Jeroboam the son of Nebat and his companions, go to hell and are punished to all eternity, according to Isaiah lxvi. 24. Others have another fate. The Israelites who have sinned with their bodies, and the heathen who have sinned with their bodies, go to hell and are punished twelve months, after which their body pines away; their soul is burnt; and the wind scatters them under the feet of the righteous, as in Malachi iv. 3. But then, to make compensation for this, it is said in another place that the righteous pray to God for Israelites of this last class; and God bids them go and heal (or save) them; and they go and stand upon the ashes of the wicked, and ask mercy for them; and now the holy God causes that they stand up out of their ashes, which is under the feet of the righteous, and He brings them to eternal life."

Upon this we remark—

(1) It gives a direct negative to the doctrine of a *universal, unconditional immortality*.

(2) It distinctly teaches the doctrine of a *real* 'destruction' for certain sinners—a destruction from which, in the case of the great mass of men, (namely, "the heathen who have sinned with their bodies,") there is no redemption. And though there is, in tenderness to Israel, a conditional deliverance for them from a fate that was counted *worse than 'everlasting suffering,'* yet that does not alter the view that even for them there

<sup>2</sup> Rosch Haschanah.

was, in the first instance, *a real destruction*. Thus we find that the 'perishing' which was spoken of in some of the previous quotations, and which, as standing there, might have been taken as a general term for punishment, did literally mean, and that to the very utmost, what the word naturally suggested.

(3) It is only a small class of men, and mostly Israelites, Jeroboam's class, who are sentenced to punishment "for ever and ever." But what, after all, does that expression mean? We know what it would mean in modern usage. Does it mean the same according to the usage either of the Old Testament, or of the ordinary Jewish writings? We answer without hesitation, that we believe it does not. We believe that the phrase "generations upon generations," as given in the article upon the Talmud already quoted, well expresses it—or, which in such a case would amount to the same, "ages upon ages," the phrase which we have ventured to suggest as giving the true sense of the peculiar expression (*eis aiōnas aiōnov*) in Rev. xiv. 11. Nor does it tend to weaken this impression when we find that these ancient Jews actually regarded 'annihilation' as an evil more to be dreaded than the one *which they designed* by the words 'everlasting punishment.' This of itself would be, we think, a strong presumption that they understood this last expression in a different sense from what Christians generally do now, and did not regard it as equivalent to endless torments.

So far, then, in regard to 'immortality,' 'destruction,'

and 'everlasting punishment,' as these appear in the ancient Jewish writings. On the other hand, there is one witness of unquestionable importance who is adduced to prove that the Pharisees of the first century did hold a belief essentially differing from that now presented.

The witness is Josephus, and his words are these:

"The Pharisees believe that souls have an *immortal* vigour in them; and that, under the earth, there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but the former shall have power to live and revive again. . . But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this, that souls die with the bodies. . . The Essenes teach the immortality of souls. Again, the Essenes believe that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that souls are immortal and continue for ever (*τὰς δὲ ψυχὰς ἀθανάτους αἰὲ ἀναμένειν*) . . . are united to their bodies as in prisons . . . and when set free from the bonds of the flesh . . . rejoice and mount upward . . . And the Greeks seem to me to have had the same notion, when to the souls of their brave men they allot the islands of the blessed; . . . and to the souls of the wicked the regions of the ungodly in Hades . . . where certain persons are punished, which is built on the first supposition that souls are immortal. Again, the Pharisees say that all souls are incorruptible (*ψυχὴν δὲ πᾶσαν μὲν ἀφθαρτον*), but that *the souls of good men are only removed into other bodies*, while those of the wicked are subject to everlasting punishment (*αἰδίῳ τιμωρίᾳ κολάζεσθαι*). . . The Sadducees take away the belief of the everlasting duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades."

Thus Josephus<sup>3</sup>—who, in accordance with such principles,

<sup>3</sup> Antiq. xviii. 1. 3-5; Wars, ii. 8. 11, 14.

represents himself as arguing with his companions against their purpose of self-destruction—"that the bodies of all men are indeed mortal, being created out of corruptible matter; but that the soul is ever immortal, and *a portion of the divinity which inhabits our bodies.*"<sup>4</sup> And so, when Eleazar aims at reanimating the courage of his countrymen in the siege, he makes free use of the great argument of the soul's immortality, and holds out to them the prospect of eternal liberty.<sup>5</sup>

How, then, are we to understand, and what value are we to attach to these statements? The question admits, we think, of a simple enough answer. And that may be given in the words of a writer whose judgment is of the very highest value:—"The representations of Josephus upon this subject are of little worth," says Jost.<sup>6</sup> And then, in regard to the Pharisees, he says that "they sought to perfect themselves by piety for eternal blessedness;" adding the following as the whole of the information which he thinks it needful to furnish as to the Rabbinical teaching of New Testament times:

"The angels of *destruction* are ever at hand. . . . An appointed angel meets the man at death, with a sword in his hand. The man is brought to judgment. His deeds are brought forward; and it is settled who is to fall into Gehenna, and who is to come into the presence of God, in order to be *eternally crowned*, and to feed in the presence of the Godhead."<sup>7</sup>

Thus we meet with *destruction* again; and how to

<sup>4</sup> Wars, iii. 8. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ib. vii. 8. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten. i. p. 224.

<sup>7</sup> Ib. p. 304.

estimate that the foregoing extracts may have taught us.

But further, as regards Josephus, we see how, in some important respects, he has entirely misrepresented Jewish belief, and shown a distinct tendency towards a style of thought at direct variance with it.

(1) He *ignores* the belief in *resurrection* which we know was held by the Pharisees (see Acts xxiii. 8; xxiv. 15); and in place of this he imputes to them the Greek idea of the *removal of the souls of the good into other human bodies*. This, of course, is independent of the Jewish notion of the pre-existence of souls. We speak of the belief which he imputes to the Pharisees *in place of* what they really held.

(2) He, speaking as a Jew, expresses, on his own behalf, the Platonic belief as to the distinctive characters of body and soul; namely, that the one is in itself *corruptible and transient*, the other *a portion of the divinity, and as such immortal*. He does not, indeed, in saying this, expressly assert, but he seems plainly to imply, a belief in common with the Greek philosopher, of the uncreated nature of the soul—as distinguished from the Jewish view, that all souls were brought into being at the creation.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while Josephus believed that souls were *from* eternity, he would necessarily conclude that they were *to* eternity. It follows that—while the Pharisees, believing in the creation, could also believe in the destruction of souls—Josephus could

<sup>8</sup> See Gfroerer as above, ii. p. 65.

not. In this way has the historian ascribed to his countrymen views which we can venture to say they did not hold; he has represented them in a light which is far more Greek than Jewish; he has done this under some misguiding impulse, while holding up the Jewish portrait to the eyes of Greeks and Romans;—the reasonable inference being, that we cannot accept his testimony to the effect that the *Pharisees believed in endless sufferings*. It would be easy, indeed, to dispose of the mere expressions employed by him with this view, if that were all—easy to class such language with what we so frequently find in other Jewish writers; but the view given by him of the *nature* of the soul seems to forbid us thus to interpret his account of its punishment; while, at the same time, it is precisely that view which destroys our confidence in his statements as furnishing an accurate account of Jewish belief. Suffice it to add, both for satisfaction to ourselves, and in mitigation of the censure from which Josephus cannot be freed, that as the Jews *were* in the habit of using strong language about the duration of punishment, so he could, with less of untruthfulness, attribute to them a view which the words themselves *might have borne*, but which certainly was not *their* view when they used the words.

May we suppose, in short, that Josephus, holding for himself an essentially Platonic view of the soul, was tempted so far to colour the opinions of his countrymen as was needful for bringing them into a partial correspondence with his own? But if, on the other hand, the real belief of the Jews as to ‘immortality’ and ‘punish-



ment' was what we have found it to be, then we can well see how they would understand our Lord when He announced the 'destruction' of the impenitent; and how little apt they would be to misunderstand Him when He spoke of 'an undying worm,' 'everlasting condemnation,' and 'the unquenchable fire.'

## CHAPTER III.

## EARLY CHRISTIAN BELIEF—THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS.

WE had not intended to go beyond the field of direct Scripture testimony in regard to the great subject before us; but when we see with what confidence it is asserted that the voice of Christian antiquity is unanimous in teaching the doctrine of endless suffering, and when we think how serious a bar to the reception of the truth is presented by such assertions, we cannot but endeavour to show that the statements in question are not well founded. Unfortunately, indeed, the belief in everlasting torment came to be too soon and too widely entertained. What there is of it in the earliest Christian remains shall be our enquiry now.

Beginning with the writings of the Apostolic Fathers,<sup>1</sup> we ask attention to the following:

(a) *Punishment*.—In some of these writings (though by no means the most important) we meet with the expressions—‘everlasting punishment,’ ‘everlasting fire,’

<sup>1</sup> See Jacobson's edition, containing Clement's Epistle to the Corinthians (with the so-called second Epistle of Clement appended); Epistles of Ignatius to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians, Smyrnæans and Polycarp; Epistle of Polycarp to the Philipians; and the Martyrdom of Polycarp.

'unquenchable fire,'—but simply in the way of a bare quotation from the New Testament—with no addition or specification to define the precise view of the writer. In not one of them do we find a hint of *human immortality*, or of everlasting *suffering*.

(b) It seems that the 'eternal life' designed by these writers is nothing else than an equivalent of that 'immortality' or 'indestructibility' which they uniformly represent as belonging to man only when he partakes of Christ's salvation. And not only would it properly follow from this, but it seems to be distinctly taught, that *perdition*, as involving *an end of their existence*, was believed to be the doom of the unsaved.

In proof of this, we now give, as we believe, every passage from the writers referred to bearing on the future state. Some of the quotations may seem of little value. But it is manifestly important that the whole be presented—and as much as possible in the actual connection—with a view to a correct judgment.

#### EPISTLE OF CLEMENT.

In regard to the future of the wicked, we find nothing in this Epistle that would fairly suffice to show the writer's belief. And yet we have expressions not a few throwing important light upon the subject, and leaving, we think, very little reason to question what were the views of this companion of the chief of the Apostles. It would be important, even if that were all, to see that Clement knows no other meaning than the ordinary one of those terms in which Scripture conveys its infor-

mation on our subject. This, and something more, will appear from the following references.

(a) He thus employs the word *perish*.—

“Whoever shall be found outside of Rahab’s house shall perish” (*ἀπολούνται*)—the important parallel being added—“Showing, by the scarlet line, that there is redemption through the blood of the Lord for all that believe and hope in God.” (c. 12.)—“Pharaoh and his army perished.” (c. 51.)—“Esther, that she might deliver the twelve tribes about to *perish*.” (c. 55.) “They perish, they die.” (Job iv. 20, 21; c. 39.)

(b) *Death*.—

“Envy by which *death* also entered into the world.” (c. 3.)—“As I live, saith the Lord, I desire not the *death* of a sinner.” (c. 8.)—“Leaving envy which leads to *death*.” (c. 9.)—“Korah, &c., whose judgment was made manifest; for they descended alive into Hades; and *death* swallowed them up.” (c. 51.) “The Jews, acting contrary to His will, receive the *death* appointed to them. But we, as we have been favoured with greater knowledge, incur so much greater a danger.” (c. 41.)

What the ‘danger’ is, greater than the ‘death’ alluded to, he does not say. But he manifestly alludes to the passage in Heb. x. 28–31, 39, where ‘death’ is spoken of as the evil to which the Jewish rebel was exposed, and ‘perdition’ as the lot of the unbeliever now.

(c) *Save and salvation*.—

“Ye had great conflict that the number of His elect might be *saved*.” (c. 2.)—“Noah preached repentance, and they who submitted were *saved*.” . . . “The Ninevites repenting obtained *salvation*.” (c. 7.)—“The Lord *saved* through Noah the creatures that entered into the ark.”—“Lot was *saved*.”

out of Sodom—the rebellious being given over to punishment and distress (κόλασιν καὶ αἰκυμὸν)—his wife being turned into a pillar of salt—that it might be known how the wavering serve for judgment and a sign to all generations.” (πάσαις ταῖς γενεαῖς, c. 11.)—“On account of faith and hospitality Rahab was *saved*. . . . When ye take the city (said she) *saves* me and my father’s house. . . . Gather them under thy roof, and they shall be *saved*.” (c. 12.)

(d) The following, besides his ascriptions of praise to God, are the only express references to the eternal state which the Epistle contains.—

“How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God!—Life in immortality, (ζωὴ ἐν ἀθανασίᾳ) splendour in righteousness,” &c. (c. 35.)

And yet it is not clear how he means this to be taken; since he speaks of such things as being “sub-  
jected to our understanding now”—in distinction from  
“the things prepared for those who wait for them.”  
Again,

“Through Him the Lord willed that we should taste of the *immortal* knowledge” (τῆς ἀθανάτου γνώσεως, c. 36).

Once more, he says of those who have been faithful under persecution that

“They inherit honour and glory, and are lifted up by God so as to have a memorial enduring for ever and ever” (εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων, c. 45).

Besides this he is fond of quoting from the Old Testament such sentences as—

“If ye rebel, the sword shall devour you.” (c. 8.)—“The meek shall inherit the land, but the transgressors shall be

destroyed out of it"—"I beheld the wicked, and lo, he was not." (c. 14.)—"The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." (c. 22.)—"Let Me alone, that I may destroy them, and I will blot out their name from under heaven . . . but Moses said, Blot me out of the book of the living." (c. 53.)

Such is all that Clement teaches in regard to immortality or punishment. And all that we can do is to infer from such principles, and from such use of language, what he meant when he said—

"Take heed, beloved, lest His many favours turn out for judgment to us all" (*κρίμα*, c. 21).—"Let us fear Him, that by His mercy we may be hidden from the coming judgments." (c. 28.)

#### SECOND EPISTLE OF CLEMENT.

In this very ancient writing—whoever may have been the author—we find frequent reference to the state of man as *perishing*, with every appearance of the expression being designed in its ordinary sense, and without one intimation of natural *immortality*, or endless *suffering*.

After insisting upon a right estimate of salvation,<sup>2</sup> he says,—

"The Father *saved* us *when perishing*" (*ἀπολλυμένους*, c. 1.) "Thus he says that He must save the (*τοὺς*) *perishing*. For this is a thing great and wonderful, to confirm—not the standing, but the falling. And thus Christ chose to save

<sup>2</sup> "For," says he, "when we hear as of little things we err, not knowing from what we have been called, and by whom, and to what place, and what Jesus Christ undertook to suffer for us."

the (τὰ) *perishing*; and, coming, He saved many; calling us when *already perishing*."

Now let it be fairly considered whether these words can have any sense but one. The expression, it will be observed, is not '*lost*'—marked, as that may be considered, with more of latitude and flexibility—but '*perishing*;' and who will venture to say that that, as used by the writer, actually means, not coming to a miserable end, but entering on an endless state of misery? For, besides the unquestionable meaning of the term, how can we overlook the especial emphasis put upon it as denoting a *present condition*, in progress towards *completion*? We were "*already perishing*;" we were like "*things that were falling*."

If such then is plainly the writer's view, let us combine with it what he says in the same passage—

"Our whole life was nothing else than death. . . He took pity on us, and in compassion saved us—beholding in us much wandering and *destruction* (ἀπώλειαν), and that we had no hope of *salvation* except from Him. For He called us when *we were not*, and willed that, *from not being, we should be*." (c. 1.)

The writer seems here to have had in his mind the words—"Who calleth the things that be not as though they were." (Rom. iv. 17.) Only he is not like the Apostle speaking of *creation*, but of *redemption*. What remains, then, but to conclude that the '*not being*' is *the state into which sin has brought us*—the state to which, in its full consummation, we are tending—which, except for grace, is our proper and inevitable

state—but from which by grace we are saved? And how can we regard all this but as the equivalent of the *destruction* spoken of, in the natural and ordinary sense—destruction as bringing with it a real end of being? This, we must believe (even if not the only possible meaning) is the proper meaning of the language here—so naturally does it spring from the words used, and so entirely does it harmonize with the previous words, “Our whole life was nothing else than death”—the death being thus characterized as a ‘not being.’ And this, be it observed, is all the length to which we are taken in a passage where the object is to magnify salvation and the necessity for it to the utmost.

Let us now see how this writer refers to some Scripture passages.

“Fear not them that kill you, and can do nothing more to you. But fear Him who, after your dying, hath power over soul and body to cast into the hell of fire.” (c. 5.)

Now it is surely of importance to find such words quoted after the sentiments already expressed. It really seems as if the author in such a case, by referring to a passage which appears at least to indicate a literal perishing, actually meant to take it in that very sense. And if he takes such words in such a sense, then we cannot doubt in what sense he says—

“Great and wonderful is the promise of Christ, and the rest of the coming kingdom, and of *eternal life*.”

So it can hardly be doubtful what such a writer means when he quotes the words—



"What profit is it if one gain the whole world, and lose the soul?" (c. 6.)

Again, he pleads that here only we have the opportunity of *repenting, being saved, and obtaining eternal life*;—giving as an illustration the case of the potter re-fashioning a piece of injured clay—whereas if once he throws it into the furnace it is beyond further help. (c. 8.) This at least presents the picture of entire destruction, and prepares for understanding the exhortation which follows—

"Keep the flesh pure, and the seal spotless, that we may obtain the *eternal life*."

And, once more, as if in accordance with all this, to show that he never meant to *imply* that *eternity of torment* which he certainly does not *express*, he says—

"They who prefer enjoyment here to the coming promise—*they know not how much of torment* the enjoyment here brings." (c. 10.)

Perfectly accordant this with the losing of the soul—the destroying of body and soul in hell—and the casting of the worthless clay into the furnace. But if the writer had really meant that the torment was to be endless, one would have expected that, with such a disposition to alarm, he would here or somewhere have said as much, instead of so significantly saying, "*They know not how much of*."

There are two cases, however, in which it may be argued that the writer goes beyond this. One of these is where he says (c. 7)—

"Of those who keep not the seal, saith he, their worm

shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be for a spectacle to all flesh."

Now, in answer to any such argument, we refer to what we have already said on the passage. It is a mere quotation that we have to do with—and a quotation which does nothing to show that the writer takes the words differently to what we hold to be their true sense; namely, that their worm has no existence independently of *their own*, this last being a matter requiring separate information. Besides which, the quotation is not even from the New Testament, where the view is presented under a very intensified form, but from the prophecy of Isaiah, where the reference is entirely to a temporary scene in the valley of Hinnom. Is it needful after this to add that the sentence from Clement occurs in a passage where, as is so usual in these writers, the *good* alone is represented as the *imperishable*?

The other expression is—

"Doing the will of Christ, we shall find rest. But if not, nothing shall deliver us from the *everlasting punishment*." (c. 6.)

Still nothing about everlasting *suffering*. And in the absence of all trace of universal immortality—coupled with the free and varied reference to destruction which we have met with—what can the writer mean but a punishment which consists in "everlasting *destruction* from the presence of the Lord"?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the *Three Letters*, &c., by Dr. Angus (in the pamphlet form, 1870), the first paragraph stands thus, as a supposed testimony to his doctrine—

"*Clement of Rome*, A.D. 30-100. All souls are immortal (ἀθάνατοι),

IGNATIUS.—We now come to the very important testimony of this writer, martyred at Antioch early in the second century, and undoubtedly an acquaintance of apostles.<sup>4</sup>

even of the ungodly, to whom it would have been better not to be incorruptible" (*ἀφθάρτους*).

Now we are certainly indebted to Dr. Angus for this specimen of the style in which an ancient Greek writer expressed himself, when he wished to teach human immortality; plainly showing that he regarded the 'incorruptible' and 'immortal' as identical, or, at least, inseparable. Is it too much if we ask that the same words, in the same connection, may be interpreted in the same way, when, instead of being affirmed of the wicked by such a writer as the one just quoted, they are plainly affirmed of the *righteous only* by men like Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria? At the same time it must be distinctly told that *the writer quoted is not* 'Clement of Rome.' In ages of darkness this might be thought. But no one thinks so now. Who he really was nobody knows, nor yet his date.

The passage occurs (as pointed out by the Rev. H. Constable, in the *Rainbow*, July, 1870) in the *Clementine Homilies*, xi. 11. We give it entire, as a specimen of the style of a writer in a later age really teaching a *suffering immortality*—a style to which we can find no parallel in the first two centuries. "And even if, by dissolution of the body, you should escape punishment, how should you manage by that to flee from your soul? For the soul is immortal, even of the ungodly, to whom it would be better not to have been incorruptible. For being punished by the unquenchable fire, in an unlimited punishment, and not dying, it can receive no end to its evil" (*κακῶν*).

To this we add the following from the same or some other writer under the assumed name—"But if any shall persist in wickedness to the end of their life, the soul which is immortal, then departing, shall suffer punishment, according to the continuance of its impiety. For the souls even of the wicked are immortal, though perhaps they might wish them to come to an end equally with their bodies. But it is not so; for they must endure the punishment of eternal fire without end; their nature being incapable of death, so as to issue in their destruction" (*ad perniciem sui naturam non habent moriendi*).—*Clem. Recog.* v. 28.

<sup>4</sup> There can be little doubt that his Epistles have been grossly

(a) His only reference to future *suffering* is in Ephes. c. 16:

“Such a one being defiled shall go into the fire that is unquenchable.”

We need hardly repeat that the unquenchableness of the fire does not necessitate the endless existence of all that is cast into it.

(b) *Life Eternal—Immortality—Destruction.*

“Christ died for us, that, believing in His death, ye might escape dying (τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἐκφυγεῖτε,” Trall c. 2).

“Why do we foolishly *perish*—ignorant of the *gift* which the Lord has sent?” (Ephes. c. 17.)

Now we might reasonably infer from this that the ‘gift’ referred to would be just the opposite of ‘perishing’ in the natural sense.<sup>5</sup> And what else *can* we infer, when we find in the very same paragraph ‘immortality’ spoken of as manifestly the ‘gift’ which the writer had

tampered with by the interpolation of passages exhibiting an arrogance of ecclesiastical (not sacerdotal) pretensions altogether foreign to the spirit of that age. But this will detract nothing from the extreme value of the passages with which we are now concerned, so long as we are certain that the tendency of subsequent ages was rather to the opposite view than to the one that appears in Ignatius.

<sup>5</sup> In using such language we mean the sense of which these writings furnish various examples. (See p. 285 above.) So “nothing shall be *lost*”—i.e. of labour or reward. (Ign. to Smyrn. c. 10.) Trajan tells Ignatius, that the Christians “transgressing his commands must miserably *perish*” (Martyrd. of Ign. c. 2),—the word being used in the same sense c. 6. There are other passages where the connection furnishes no help, but none in which any sense is required except that which we call the natural one. Thus, “I measure myself that I may not *perish* by boasting.” (Ign. Trall. 4.) “If he boast, he *perishes*.” (Id. Polyc. 5.)

in view; and 'the life set before us' as equally the opposite of 'perishing'? The words are these—

"For this purpose did the Lord take ointment upon His head, that He might breathe upon the Church *immortality* (ἀφθαρσίαν). Let not the prince of this world carry you away captive from *the life set before you*" (ἐκ τοῦ προκειμένου ζῆν).

Again, in the very next sentence (c. 18), we read of "the cross as an offence to unbelievers; but to us salvation and eternal life." Thus it would seem that, in the mind of Ignatius, 'immortality' and 'eternal life' were closely allied with one another, and both of them with the 'life set before us,' as the opposite of 'perishing.'

Nor do we find this conclusion to lose in strength as we go on. For in the same Epistle (c. 19) we read of

"God shewing Himself in our humanity, in order to the newness of an *everlasting life*" (εἰς καινότητα αἰδίου ζωῆς).

Now what can these last two words mean but simply—life without end? And what less can the other words imply than that this was a *new thing* introduced into our world by the incarnation? Or what else can the same writer mean when he speaks immediately after (c. 20) of Christians as

"Breaking one bread, which is the medicine of *immortality*, an antidote against our dying, (a pledge) of our living in Christ for ever?"<sup>5</sup>

His entire meaning, in thus writing, may not be quite apparent. But it seems sufficiently plain that he means, at the very least, to give his own view of the words in

<sup>5</sup> Φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν, ἀλλὰ ζῆν ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ διὰ παντός.

which our Lord speaks of Himself as "the Bread that giveth life to the world"—a view implying this, that *immortality* in the strictest sense is *included* in that gift.

Again, Ignatius writes to Polycarp (c. 2)—


"Watch as an athlete of God. The prize is *immortality* (*ἀφθαρσία*) and eternal life."

Now, whatever may be the distinction between these two expressions, it is certain that the former is regularly employed by the ancient Christian writers to denote simply *immortality*.

These extracts may help us to understand better what follows, though differently perhaps from what we should otherwise have done.

"Since, then, *things have an end*, and the two are set up together, life and death, each one shall go to his own place. For as there are two coins, the one of God, and the other of the world, each of them has its own stamp impressed on it—the unbelieving the stamp of this world, and the believing the stamp of God the Father, in love through Christ; into whose passion, except we die voluntarily, His life is not in us." (Magnes. c. 5.)

Now such language may sound peculiar, and the style would certainly be unusual among us. But does not the writer at least understand himself as affirming that there will be *an end* after a time of *all things*, except those that partake of what he calls 'life'—the 'coin and stamp of God'—the 'dying into Christ's passion' with a view to 'His life'?



Whether such was the meaning of Ignatius, another extract from the same epistle may help us to decide.

"Through Him and His death, whom some deny, has our life sprung up. . . . How shall we be able to live without Him? . . . Let us not be insensible of His goodness. For *if He reward us according to our works, WE ARE NO MORE.*" (*οὐκ ἔτι ἐσμέν.* c. 9, 10.)<sup>7</sup>

And, finally, what meaning but one would ever be imputed to such a writer when he quoted the words—"What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose (*ζημιωθῇ*) his own soul?"

POLYCARP.—A single testimony may be added from this venerable man.

"If we please Him in this world, we shall obtain the coming one also (*ἀποληψόμεθα καὶ τὸν μέλλοντα*), as He hath promised to raise us from the dead." (Philip. c. 5.)

Such is the evidence from these earliest Christian writings for immortality as the peculiar portion of believers in Christ. The doctrine seems, in short, to run

<sup>7</sup> It is easy to see what answer will be attempted to this. The expression, it will be said, is nothing more than an echo of the Psalmist's words in Psalm xxxvii. 10, 36, when yet there is no annihilation in the case, since a future state is still awaiting those who are said to "be no more." True, but the Psalmist was describing a palpable event as happening before the eyes of men now; while Ignatius was asserting the *principle* of the divine government to be, that if we receive according to our deserts, "we are no more;" implying, of course, that whosoever does so receive, *there is an end* of him. I infer, as regards the correspondence between the psalm and Ignatius, that as in the one there is described a real 'ending' in the visible world there spoken of, so in the other there is as real an 'ending' in the world still invisible, but looked for now.

through them—sometimes by a thread or two, sometimes by many. Ignatius especially seems never to have had it out of his mind—teaching the truth now in one form, then in another, till he reaches the climax, that, without grace, “WE ARE NO MORE.” What he meant by his single reference to “the unquenchable fire” should not, after this, be doubtful. What *could* he mean but that this fire should burn up the chaff till it was *no more*?

And so, in what other light than that of a doctrine thus fully taught can we fairly regard two other passages of which so much has been made in favour of endless suffering? They are the only passages not yet adduced, and occur in the Epistle from Smyrna on the martyrdom of Polycarp.

“They despised earthly torments; by one short hour effecting redemption from ‘the everlasting punishment.’ For they had in view to escape ‘the everlasting’ and ‘*never quenched fire*.’” (c. 2.)

Here again we have that style of which we shall find as we proceed so many examples; namely, the bare quotation of certain Scripture language, but with no trace that any meaning is designed beyond what we have found the original to require. If the expressions as used in Scripture *must* mean endless torment, then they ought to mean the same when thus quoted. But we find nothing *here* to show that they have such a meaning *there*. And thus all argument from the quotations goes for nothing. The avoidance, in fact, on each occasion, of every approach to the suggestion of suffering



without end is, we do not say surprising, but certainly observable. And in the present case we have an example of this in the circumstance, that while we do read of 'earthly torments,' there is not a word about 'torments' that are 'everlasting.'

"Thou threatenest me with the fire that burns for an hour, and after a little is quenched. But thou knowest not the fire of the coming judgment, and everlasting punishment reserved for the ungodly." (c. 11.)

Still nothing beyond the mere adaptation of language regarding which we can confidently plead that, in its own place, it simply means 'everlasting destruction'—nothing to counterbalance the solemn words in which the writers of this collection have been found declaring that without Christ we all 'perish'—that 'immortality,' or 'not dying,' but 'living for ever,' constitutes a 'new thing' which comes to us only through the 'one living Bread;'—in short, that, if "He reward us according to our works, WE ARE NO MORE."

If still pressed with the question—What *did* those writers mean when in four places they applied the word 'everlasting' to 'fire' or 'punishment'? I can only answer, that they may have meant what has been already given as the meaning of that language when used by our Lord. Or they may have taken the word 'everlasting' with something more of latitude than the New Testament allows to it—regarding it, perhaps, as expressing the whole term of an existence altogether undefined in its duration. But that they taught the *endless* existence of the lost, every thing that they have

otherwise said positively forbids us to suppose; and that they have never spoken of the endless *suffering* of the lost is as important as it is certain.

To these testimonies it will not be superfluous to add what we find in the writings ascribed to *Barnabas* and *Hermas*—formerly classed among the Apostolic Fathers. For, however we may estimate these compositions, they are doubtless of great antiquity, and were highly esteemed in the first ages; being frequently read in churches, and regarded by some as canonical. The value once attached to them has received a striking illustration in the circumstance of their both having been found by Tischendorf appended to the New Testament in the *Codex Sinaiticus*. They may be dated as belonging to the first half of the second century.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS.

Now it is important to see that of endless sufferings this writer knows absolutely nothing. 'Life' and 'Death'—these are his subjects in connection with the future. Thus—

He speaks of the hope "of the life which is to come." (c. 1.) "They that put their trust in Him shall live for ever." (c. 8.) "Who is there that would live for ever?—Let him hear the voice of my Son." (c. 9.) And again, Satan is spoken of as depriving men of their "spiritual life" (c. 2)—but with the marked absence of any hint that an

<sup>8</sup> The references below are to Dressel's edition of the 'Apostolic Fathers,' and to the translation of the two pieces now before us in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, edited by Roberts and Donaldson.

existence of another kind remained to them. On the other hand, the great evil to be avoided is simply spoken of as 'death.' As the serpent-bitten in the wilderness *died*, so sinners are "delivered unto the pain of *death*." (c. 12.) "Thou shalt glorify Him who hath redeemed thee from death." (c. 18.)

There is one sentence, indeed, which might be quoted as showing that the writer meant *death* to be understood in a sense different from that given in these pages. Let us consider it—

"The way of darkness is crooked and full of cursing. In it is the way of eternal death, with punishment, in which way are the things that *destroy* the soul (τὰ ἀπολοῦντα τὴν ψυχὴν." c. 20).

Thus death is spoken of as a 'punishment'—as 'eternal'—and as equivalent to the 'destruction' of the soul. Now, with all this, of course, we fully agree. At the same time, it should be unnecessary to add that 'eternal death' is not equivalent to 'endless suffering.' In such a case only could the expression be alleged as proving that the writer, by using the word 'destroy,' meant to express the idea of 'making eternally miserable.' Against this it would be fair to argue that, by the word 'destroy,' he meant 'bring to an end;' and hence that 'eternal death,' with him, meant 'everlasting destruction.' But we are not left thus to argue. The immediate context supplies this very conclusion—

"He that chooses the evil," it is said, "shall be destroyed (ἀπολείται), together with his works." (c. 21.)

Now the *works* are certainly to be destroyed in the

sense of 'coming to an end.' How otherwise, then, is the *worker* to be destroyed? What can be more like the sentiment, "The strong shall be as tow, and his work as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them"? (Isa. i. 31.) Again, says our author—

"The day is at hand in which all things shall be destroyed, together with the wicked one" (συναπολείται τῷ πονηρῷ).

Does not such a statement plainly signify that he regards the existence of evil, and of the prince of evil, as only for a time? And does not this show what he means by contrasting "the Lord who is from everlasting to everlasting" with "the prince of the *time* of unrighteousness"? (c. 18.) Can we doubt, then, what such a writer meant when he quoted the words—

"The way of the ungodly shall *perish*" (c. 10); when he said that the man should "justly *perish*" who refused to walk in the right way (c. 5); and pointed out how, on the contrary, we are to be "*saved* in the day of judgment"? (c. 21.)

#### THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS.

There are in this book, with all its faults, many solemn, arousing views of the sins and dangers of professing Christians; many things that would come home to the consciences of its original readers, and which no doubt contributed much to its ancient popularity; but the idea of endless suffering is not one of them. As in the Epistle of Barnabas, so here, the two constant themes are 'Life' and 'Death.'

"To live unto God" is the richest of blessings and the highest of rewards. "Those who possess these virtues shall . . . abide unto eternal life." "The righteous in this world are like trees which, seemingly dead in winter, yet bud forth in spring;" thus are they manifested at the last as "those who shall live in the world to come." (i. 2, 3; iii. 3 and 4.)

On the other hand, we find 'death,' as the correlative of life, spoken of with equal frequency. This, as the inevitable consequence of sin, meets us at every turn throughout the work.

"Life is distant from them," the wicked are told; "death is prepared;" "sin brings to death;" "all who will not repent have lost their life" (*ἀπώλεσαν τὴν ζωὴν*, iii. 8. 6, 7); "they are ordained to death;" "they condemn themselves to death;" "they shall utterly (Gr. by death) die."

Such, from beginning to end, is the style. Those who yield to certain enticements, represented under the figure of women, shall dwell with their tempters, who will exercise their wickedness upon them;

And then "they shall die at their hands;" "such shall be delivered to the women, and they shall kill them, taking away their life" (*θανατώσουσιν, ἀποφερομένοι τὴν ζωὴν*).

The same thing is signified by other expressions. Thus,

The wicked are "like the withered trees in the vision, that show no life in Spring, and like them shall be burnt up (*κατακαυθήσονται*)—shall be consumed—and all the heathen shall be burnt up, because they have not known Him that created them" (iii. 4)—a view which certainly denotes suffering, but not endless. Again, the wicked, "becoming withered and desert-like, destroy their own souls" (*ἀπολλύουσι τὰς*

ἐαυτῶν ψυχὰς iii. 9. 26); "men are turned from the truth, and shall perish" (ἀπολοῦνται iii. 6. 2); "the evil way leads to destruction;" while they that practise righteousness shall never be destroyed (ἀδιάφθαρτον ἔχουσιν ἕως αἰῶνος i. 2, 3.)

There is one noticeable circumstance in this book, and that is—how very little express mention of actual torment we meet with as the punishment of sin; but whenever we do, it is, strangely enough, always in connection with the present life;—

"Through sinful pleasures men are tormented and suffer punishment; and, if they repent not, they bring death on themselves." (iii. 6, 5.) "Whosoever walks in the right ways shall live, and be happy in his life; but he that neglects them *shall not live*, and shall be *unhappy in his life*." (iii. 10, 4.) He speaks even of "the great torment and weeping which souls are brought into, being tormented as if in chains;" and of the great sin of not delivering such—our negligence making us guilty of their blood. But the calamities intended are still those of the sinner's "daily life"—"calamities which some, not being able to bear, have even chosen to *destroy* themselves." (*Ib.*)

No doubt there are allusions, as we have seen, to future *suffering*; but they are few and faint.

Certain stones rejected from the spiritual building are represented as "falling into the fire and burning;" they are such as have finally departed from the living God, and never repent. (i. 3, 7.) Who, then, can doubt what such a writer means when he tells us that "those who are mastered by evil desire shall finally die (ἀποθανοῦνται εἰς τέλος); because such desires are fatal (θανατώδεις, ii. 12, 2)?" for, in the case of hopeless transgressors, "death hath everlasting ruin"

(iii. 6, 2)—which is said in contrast with the ‘corruption’ which still leaves hope of repentance here.<sup>9</sup>

It would be impossible, indeed, to conclude, or even conjecture, from this writer, the doctrine of endless suffering; and there is absolutely nothing to suggest even a protracted term of it. The former idea he has nowhere controverted, simply because he has absolutely ignored it. Nothing, as far as we have been able to understand him, was more foreign to his mind; and he has said enough, we believe, to show that he had no room for it in his calculations. For these calculations are strangely definite as to the *season* of retribution being in proportion to the *days* of any one’s transgression.<sup>1</sup> Such a mind, we are persuaded, as is implied throughout the whole piece, and comes out so explicitly in the statements now referred to, had not the remotest

<sup>9</sup> Some sentences about the restoring of rejected stones, though into an inferior place in the spiritual building, have led some to think that Hermas teaches universal restoration for penitents, by means of a coming purgatory. This is certainly a mistake, as the suffering and repentance spoken of are available only for those who have *not* been cast into the fire as finally impenitent; and therefore belong only to this life, according to the strange notion that an hour of sinning entails a month of suffering. (iii. 6, 4.) On the other hand, he distinctly states—“If the building be finished, there will no more be room for any one, but he shall be rejected.” (i. 3, 5.)

<sup>1</sup> “The hour of torment is equivalent to 30 days. If a man indulge in luxury for one day and be deceived, and tortured for one day, the day of his torture is equivalent to a whole year. For all the days of luxury, therefore, there are as many years of torture to be undergone. You see then that the time of luxury is very short, but that of punishment and torture long.” This again is spiritualized. But it sufficiently shows—in the absence of all allusion to endless suffering—what the writer’s idea was of long punishment for short indulgence. (See i. 3; iii. 6, 4.)

thought of intimating anything beyond the natural sense of the words, when he spoke in two or three places of "dying for ever;"—an expression equivalent certainly to his other expression, 'dying finally'—that is to say, incurring a death after which there should be no life. With the utmost simplicity, and without a suspicion of the sense afterwards to be attached to them, he could freely use such expressions. But had he, on the other hand, meant more than this, the peculiarly alarming style adopted by him would certainly not have permitted him to throw a veil over his meaning. Can we, then, with any propriety, question in what sense Hermas wished his reader to accept the warning—"As to the threats of the devil, fear them not; fear Him who has all power to save and to destroy" (*σῶσαι καὶ ἀπολέσαι*)? Or can we doubt in what sense the early Christians accepted such words from a writing which they thought worthy of being read in their assemblies?



## CHAPTER IV.

## CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN THE SECOND CENTURY.

## JUSTIN MARTYR.

WE now ask attention to the testimony of this important writer, by whom, as we shall find, there are two views very distinctly put forward.<sup>1</sup>

(a) The first is a repeated reference to the doom of the wicked under such expressions as ‘everlasting condemnation’ (*καταδίκη*), ‘everlasting punishment’ (*κόλασις*), ‘everlasting fire.’ The following embraces all the references of this sort possessing any importance, if we except the cases in which we find certain texts quoted in a merely literal way, which throws no light upon the meaning attached to them.

“According to Plato, Rhadamanthus and Minos will punish the wicked who come to them.” “And the same, we say, will be done by Christ—but this with everlasting punishment, and not only for a thousand years.” (Apol. i. c. 8.)

He tells the Emperor that “the Christians are his best allies, because they announce to the wicked everlasting punishment, or salvation, according to their works.” Again, “How great a motive is the thought of going to everlasting

<sup>1</sup> His writings may be set down at about A.D. 140. His martyrdom, 164.

condemnation, through (or, in) fire . . . of suffering punishment in everlasting fire." (c. 12, 17.)

"To go into a state of insensibility would be a profitable thing for the wicked. But sensibility (*αἰσθησις*) remains to all of them that have existed, and everlasting punishment." (c. 18.)

. . .<sup>2</sup> "We believe that the wicked who do not repent are punished in everlasting fire." (c. 21.)

"Christ has forewarned us that the devil shall be sent into the fire, with his army and the men that follow him, to be punished for the unlimited age, (*τὸν ἀνέλεπτον αἰῶνα*." c. 28.)

This last expression is far from denoting a real infinity or eternity; being regularly applied to objects of which the limits are simply *not apparent*—as "the boundless ocean, plain," &c. It thus defines the 'age' of punishment as one to which we cannot set the term. But as the ocean and plain, however boundless, have their limit, so may the 'boundless age' be assumed as having its end also. And this again, it seems, will throw important light on the manner in which Justin uses kindred words to characterize punishment.<sup>3</sup>

"This does no harm to us, but to the wicked worketh punishment through (or, in) everlasting fire." (c. 45.)

"A Christian woman is spoken of as warning a wicked husband of the danger of the punishment in everlasting fire." (Apol. ii. c. 1.)

He speaks of the devils as "receiving their due punish-

<sup>2</sup> The important words here omitted will be considered below.

<sup>3</sup> An instance of the word will be found in Thuc. iv. 36, in an account of military operations. See Steph. Thes., who adds, "Et similiter saepe Plato."—In Clem. Ep. c. 20, we have the expression, *ὡκεανὸς ἀνθρώποις ἀνέλεπτος*.

ment and vengeance (κόλασιν καὶ τιμωρίαν), being shut up in everlasting fire," and of "those who serve them as given up to the coming punishment in everlasting fire." (c. 8.)

"If any one says that our doctrine is vain (viz., of the wicked being punished in everlasting fire), I answer, that, if this be not so, either there is not a God; or, if there be, that He does not care for man."<sup>4</sup> (c. 9.)

Now all this is as explicit as it is terrible; and, considering the unbroken silence of the writer as to any prospect of restoration, it certainly does cut off, in his estimation, the last hope from those who are lost.

But such is not the whole doctrine of the writer on the future of the wicked. For he also teaches—if words can teach it—*the mortality of man as man*—of the soul as truly as of the body—yes, death in the sense of actually ceasing to be—a death from which those only are delivered who live a godly life in the present state. How these two different views are to be reconciled we may consider when we have seen how explicitly the second of them is put forward.

Before, however, exhibiting the view of Justin in regard to immortality, we must refer to the manner in which he opens up the subject in the principal passage to be now quoted. It is at the commencement of the

<sup>4</sup> This is a strong sentiment, and its very strength may help—in connection with the views yet to be noted—to show in what sense Justin intended his strong language to be understood throughout. For, surely, it was nothing more than a *sufficient* retribution in the coming world—apart from all idea of positive suffering through eternity—that he regarded as having so intimate a connection with the divine existence and providence.

dialogue with Trypho, where he represents himself as one day meeting with a venerable Christian, while he was still engaged as a philosopher; when the Christian, after discussing the subject of immortality, in connection with Greek philosophy, directed him for guidance to Christ and the Bible. This was the voice of God for the calling of the man. Henceforth he was a Christian. Can we expect for a moment, then, to neutralize the force of the passage in question, by alleging, as has been done, that the sentiment is not Justin's, but his preceptor's? True, it *was* not Justin's; but as plainly it *is* now. For why bring it before Trypho at all, except as what he takes to be Christ's truth? Instead of being less his own belief because stated by his preceptor, it is on that very account all the more so, inasmuch as this was the very instrumentality to which he owed his soul. The preceptor, in short, appears as an intelligent Christian arguing against Plato for Christian truth. He appears too, not simply as an individual, but as a representative Christian; thus manifestly expressing, in Justin's view, the ordinary Christian sentiment of the age—as one too already old at the time of the martyr's conversion, and thus embodying in himself something not far short of the belief of apostolic times. With this understanding of the case we may now attend to it.

It is this. The Christian preceptor first discusses and rejects the Platonic theory of souls as uncreated and immortal. And then to show how far, on the other hand, he was from the Epicurean extreme, he adds—

“But yet neither do I affirm that all souls die—which

would be a profitable thing, truly, for the wicked. What do I say, then? That those of the pious remain in some better place; but the unrighteous and evil in a worse, awaiting the season of judgment. Thus the one, appearing to be worthy of God, *do not die at all* (οὐκ ἀποθνήσκουσιν ἔτι); but the others are punished *so long as God pleases both that they should be, and should be punished.*"<sup>5</sup>

Now, surely, it is vain to argue here, as is sometimes done, that Justin means to teach merely that souls, though not inherently immortal, yet *all* become so— independently of character—by a divine grant of endless existence. It is vain to insist that, in consequence of his doctrine regarding everlasting punishment, such must be his meaning here.<sup>6</sup> For the question simply is: What do the words really signify? And, even if they were not sufficiently plain in themselves, the sequel to them would at once remove all ambiguity, as actually taking up and rejecting the modern explanation. For the young philosopher, on hearing this new sentiment, at once asks the venerable stranger whether, in so speaking, he means to express the view which Plato

<sup>5</sup> ἔστ' ἂν αὐτὰς καὶ εἶναι καὶ κολάζεσθαι ὁ Θεὸς θέλη.

<sup>6</sup> Thus in a note to the passage in the translation edited by Dr. Pusey, we find it said—"S. Justin is not to be supposed from these words to doubt or deny the eternity of punishment, as is proved by his words in the 45th sect.—but to show that souls do not exist of themselves, but of the will of God, who could reduce them again to the nothing of which He at first created them." And this is said in spite of all the passages here quoted to the contrary, which the translator gives as they are given here, except that he ventures to render the first words of the present extract—ἀλλὰ μὴν οὐδὲ ἀποθνήσκειν φημι πάσας τὰς ψυχὰς ἐγώ—into, "But at the same time I affirm that souls never perish!"

had signified regarding the world in general; namely, "that though perishable in so far as it was made, yet, on account of the divine will, it will never be dissolved, or fall under the power of death." No, he replies, he does not mean to agree with Plato, or Pythagoras, or any who hold such opinions—adding among other things—

"The soul partakes of life, since God wishes it to live. So, then, *it will not partake of it at such time as God does not choose that it shall live.* For, as the body does not keep company for ever with the soul, but, when it becomes needful that the harmony should be dissolved, the soul leaves the body, and the man is not—so also, *when it is needful that the soul should no longer be,* the vital spirit (*ζωτικὸν πνεῦμα*) departs from it, and *the soul exists no longer* (*καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ψυχὴ ἔτι*), but *it* also returns to the place whence it was taken."

In what case this end of the soul's existence happens had been stated in the foregoing portion of the conversation, and is repeated in the 'Apology' by Justin himself, who there, at least, without question, speaks his own fixed belief. His words are these—

"The men who show themselves worthy of it become incorruptible,<sup>7</sup> and free from suffering. For as He made them at first, when they were not, so we believe that they who choose the things agreeable to Him shall be adjudged worthy of incorruptibility and fellowship with Him." (Apol. i. c. 10.)

Again, c. 21. "We have been taught that those only attain to immortality (*ἀθάνατιζέσθαι*) who live holily and virtuously near to God."

<sup>7</sup> It is not possible to doubt that he uses the word 'corruptible' throughout as equivalent to 'perishable,' or 'liable to come to an end.'

Nothing can well be more distinct than these words are in *sound*. Can any one venture to say that they are less distinct in *sense*, as words addressed to an emperor and a philosopher? Nor should we overlook the allusion to the Christian belief of still earlier times as contained in the words, "*We have been taught.*" What, in short, is it but the teaching in Rom. ii. 7-9?

To the same purpose, we find him in various passages expressing his belief regarding that incorruptibility or indestructibility which can only mean immortality—referring it, as he so plainly does, not to the body only, but to the man—and as distinctly to the soul as to the body.

Thus, Apol. i. c. 13, he speaks of giving thanks to God for their *being*, and for their "again coming to be in incorruptibility"—of which Jesus Christ is "the teacher, having been born for the very purpose."

He says it would be a ridiculous thing if soldiers should engage and endure so much on behalf of those who are not able to give them anything incorruptible (*μηδὲν ἀφθαρτον*), but that we, anxious for immortality (*ἀφθαρσίας ἐρῶντας*), should not be ready to endure all that may be desired of us. (c. 39.)

"Our Jesus Christ, having been crucified and dead, arose, and having gone to heaven now reigns—the joy of those who wait for the *immortality* (*ἀφθαρσίαν*) announced by Him." (c. 42.)

Does not Justin teach that evil is not to be without end, when he says that vice loves to put on the appearance of things 'incorruptible;' since itself never has, nor can do anything (really) 'incorruptible'? For, if

the last of these words be taken in what seems its unquestionable sense, is it not plainly taught that there is a limit to the existence of *evil-doers*? (Apol. ii. c. 11.)

So in Dial. with Trypho (c. 46) we find him saying,

“We endure the extremest punishments and rejoice in death, believing that God will raise us up through Christ Himself, and *will make* us both incorruptible (*ἀφθάρτους*) and unsuffering, and *immortal*” (*ἀθάνατους*).

“God made angels and men with free will, designing, if they should choose the things agreeable to Him, to keep them both incorruptible and unpunished (*καὶ ἀφθάρτους καὶ ἀτιμωρήτους*); but, if they should do evil, to punish each as might seem good to Him.” (c. 88.)

“He will raise up all; establishing some in an everlasting and indissoluble kingdom, incorruptible, and immortal, and painless; but the others He will dismiss to punishment—everlasting fire.” (c. 117.)

And, once more, in an important passage, c. 124, he says—

“My object is to show you that, whereas men were made equally with God unsuffering and immortal, and counted worthy to be called His children, if they should obey his commandments—yet, having become like unto Adam and Eve, they now work death to themselves.”

Thus Justin plainly teaches something which, in the words of Scripture, he calls, ‘everlasting punishment,’ and ‘everlasting fire;’ and he as plainly teaches and expounds the belief that there is no actual immortality for man now, except in connection with present holiness. What, then, is our conclusion from all this? Shall we be content to say that he contradicts himself? Then,



of course, his testimony is of no value on either side. But, before coming to such a conclusion, it becomes us carefully to consider whether we should be warranted in taking so strong a step. The whole seems uttered with perfect deliberation; and in one passage, at least, the two views are so combined as to show that the writer did really design to express them both as his own. It is the passage from Apol. i. 21, where he says—

“We have been taught that those only attain to immortality (*ἀπαθανατίζεσθαι*) who live holily; and we believe that those who live wickedly and do not repent are *punished in everlasting fire*.”<sup>8</sup>

Take with this the express assertions already quoted about the non-immortality of the wicked, as implying the entire *cessation of their being*, and what can we conclude but that Justin Martyr did *not* regard the ‘everlasting condemnation,’ ‘punishment,’ ‘fire,’ of which he spoke so freely, as involving endless *suffering*?

What, then, did he mean? Positively to tell this is

<sup>8</sup> The doctrine of the everlasting fire with everlasting ‘sensibility,’ as the lot of the wicked, is taught in Apol. i. c. 52; and yet even there the real immortality is only for those *who are worthy of it*, τὰ σώματα τῶν μὲν δέξιων ἐνδύσει ἀφθαρσίαν.

So in Apol. ii. c. 7, he teaches that, God having given free will to angels and men, those who transgress shall justly receive punishment in everlasting fire. But, in connection with this, he had just said that, only on account of the Christian seed, does God refrain from bringing that confusion and dissolution upon the world, which would *terminate the existence* of bad angels and men, ἵνα μηκέτι ᾔσιν. Could one who believed in the unconditional immortality of all have spoken thus of *the extinction* of some?

not our part. But we can see plainly enough that he might have held one of the following views. He might have interpreted these Scripture expressions in the way that has been urged above, as the only interpretation practically admissible. That is to say, he might have believed, and why not?—that everlasting punishment meant everlasting destruction—in the sense, namely, in which a Greek would understand the word ‘destruction’—the only sense in which our author ever uses the word (or allied verb) in any single case outside the present subject. And so he might have considered that the ‘condemnation’ and the ‘fire’ were called ‘everlasting,’ because, in the very strictest sense, their results were to be so. Or, he may have taken the word *αἰώνιος* as expressive of the whole continuance of the sinner’s existence—that existence which he himself had so expressly represented as terminable, however indefinite its period; and as thus furnishing a marked contrast to everything like the ‘thousand years’ sentences to which he had referred. In this sense the punishment of the wicked would be, as he represents it, truly *unceasing*. Thus he cuts off all hope for the impenitent. They are punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; and the instrument of the punishment is fire.

But explain as we may the expressions in question—we are still met by the undeniable fact that, while Justin Martyr, on the one hand, regards the wicked as victims of ‘everlasting punishment,’ he constantly speaks, on the other, of *ἀθανασία* and *ἀφθαρσία*, as the

lot of the righteous only. And nothing can be plainer than that by such terms he means to express, in the very fullest sense, an endless and indestructible existence. As a Greek philosopher, he had been accustomed to this usage of the words, and this alone. He had been taught by certain of his masters to *affirm* such terms of the *soul*, and *deny* them of the *body*. He now as a Christian *affirms* them of *body* and *soul* alike, in the case of the *saved*; and *denies* them *totally* as regards the *unsaved*. He begins, in fact, his chief work by showing how, as a philosopher, he had understood and applied the language. He proceeds in the same work, as a Christian, retaining of course his former understanding of the terms, but making an entirely new application of them. Thus, whatever ambiguity there might lurk under the grandeur of the expression ζωὴ αἰώνιος, (eternal life), there seems absolutely no room for doubt as to what he means when he speaks of ἀθανασία and ἀφθαρσία (immortality and incorruptibility). And even if we allowed that such language might be ambiguous in an Epistle to Christians, what question could there be as to its meaning in an Apology to the Emperor?

It is impossible, in short, that our author can, in his use of the word αἰώνιος, have meant to point to an endless existence in suffering. Than the proof of this nothing can be more complete. For he has absolutely cut away all ground from under any one who might have imputed to him such a thought. By his altogether *denying* to the impenitent an endless existence, he has

plainly made it impossible that he should assert their endless *sufferings*.<sup>9</sup>

EPISTLE TO DIOGNETUS.—Let us here add a sentence from this brilliant gem of Christian antiquity<sup>1</sup> appended to the writings of Justin Martyr—as showing how, in those days, they could speak of the ‘everlasting fire.’ The difference between their way and ours was the difference between the words ‘until’ and ‘without.’ The passage runs thus—

“Then wilt thou despise that which is counted death here, and fear that which is death indeed—reserved as it is for

<sup>9</sup> We have met with no attempt to harmonize Justin Martyr with himself, except what proceeds upon the fallacy noted above in referring to Dr. Pusey’s edition. Thus Moehler (*Patrologie*, p. 242), quotes Dial. c. 6, pleading that the author simply means—that the soul *would not live if God did not choose to make it*—adding, “But that the soul has life, being, and immortality only from God, who can deny? That it *would* sink again into its own nothing, if God so pleased, who can but admit? Thus is Justin’s doctrine neither unorthodox (unkirchlich), nor has he contradicted himself.” This is easily said. But the writer forgets that Justin has expressly repudiated this very view; and overlooks the difference between the two ideas—‘*would not live if God did not choose*,’ and ‘*will not live when God does not choose*.’

The following gives a very different, and surely a more impartial view—“The theologians of the primitive age did not so completely agree concerning the immortality of the soul. They were far from denying the doctrine itself, or entertaining any doubts respecting the possibility of the thing. But some of them, *e.g.* Justin, Tatian, and Theophilus, from various reasons supposed the existence of a soul which, though mortal in itself, or at least indifferent in relation to mortality or immortality, either acquires immortality as a promised reward by its union with the spirit and the right use of its liberty, or, in the opposite case, perishes together with the body.”—See Hagenbach’s *Hist. of Doctrines* (Clarke’s Transl.), vol. i. p. 151.

<sup>1</sup> “Dieses herrliche Denkmal des christlichen Geistes aus der ältesten Kirche.”—Moehler.

those who shall be condemned to that everlasting fire which shall punish *until the end* (μέχρι τέλους)<sup>2</sup> those who are delivered over to it." (c. 10.)

Did not this ardent Christian, then, believe—and he had more of the real doctrine of the New Testament than we always meet with in these writers—did he not believe alike in two things which now are often warmly pronounced to be incompatible—the very attempt to combine them being regarded with pity or impatience—these two things being no other than the “everlasting fire,” and a “punishment which has an end”?

<sup>2</sup> Compare with Dan. vii. 27; and mark at the same time the use of the word ‘destroy,’ as indicating both a *process* and a *termination*—ἀπολίσσαι ἕως τέλους.—*Septuagint*.

## CHAPTER V.

THEOPHILUS; ATHENAGORAS; TATIAN.

THEOPHILUS, Bishop of Antioch<sup>1</sup>—"well known," says Eusebius, "as the sixth in succession from the Apostles." In this writer we find the same mention of (a) 'everlasting punishment,' in connection with (b) the doctrine of 'non-immortality,' as we have found so frequently in Justin Martyr. This connection must not be overlooked. For, if it be important to know what language a man uses, it must be more important still to know what sense he attaches to it. Theophilus, then, writing a treatise in three books to Autolychnus, a heathen philosopher, thus presents these two points:

(a) "If thou believest not now, thou shalt be punished then, when troubled in everlasting punishments" (*ἀνιώνμενος ἐν αἰωνίοις τιμωρίαις*).—"The writings of the prophets will conduct thee so as to escape the everlasting punishments (*κολάσεις*), and obtain the everlasting benefits of God." (i. 14.)

He then quotes from Romans, ch. ii., with slight variation, but with one addition of much significance—

"To those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for immortality (*ἀφθαρσίαν*), He will grant eternal life.

<sup>1</sup> Died A.D. 181.

To the unbelieving there shall be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; and (here is the addition)—*at last everlasting fire shall seize such.*"<sup>2</sup>

The Apostle, it will be observed, had, in his dark picture of future woe, stopped short of any such element as this. Theophilus, on the other hand, appends it to that picture; he speaks of it as something which is to *follow* the other; while the sentence added by him to the apostolic view suggests a serious question as to the light in which he regarded that view. For if the punishment was to be *endless*, and to consist in an exposure to an *endless fire*, why add to a description already so minute the peculiar sentiment in question—"at last everlasting fire shall *seize such*"? Does it not seem, in short, as if the writer meant thus to intimate his belief that the fire would *make an end* of the wicked, when once their *retribution was complete*?

(b) This question, which the passage itself seems so clearly to suggest, receives from the following a very definite answer—

"Death was sent as a benefit to Adam, that he might not continue for ever existent in sin.<sup>3</sup> Like a vessel marred and recast, so it happens to man through death. For he is broken that he may be found sound at the resurrection,—spotless, just, and immortal." (b. ii. 26.)

"But, some one will say, Was man made mortal by nature? By no means. Immortal? Nor do we say that. If immortal, He would have made him a god. If mortal, God would have seemed to be the author of sin. Therefore

<sup>2</sup> καὶ τὸ τέλος τοὺς τοιοῦτους καθέξει πῦρ αἰώνιον.

<sup>3</sup> τὸ μὴ διαμεῖναι αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ ὄντα.

He made him neither mortal nor immortal, but capable of both, so that, if he was carried to the things which lead to immortality, he might receive immortality as a reward and become godlike;<sup>4</sup> but, on the other hand, if he should turn to the works of death, might become the author of death to himself. Now God repairs the evil. For, as man brought death upon himself by disobedience, so, by obeying the will of God, he that chooses may obtain for himself the eternal life. For God has given us a law and holy precepts which every one that does any may be saved, and obtaining the resurrection (τῆς ἀναστάσεως τυχὼν) may inherit immortality." (ἀφθαρσίαν.<sup>5</sup> ii. 27.)

How is it possible here to resist the conclusion that Theophilus regarded *immortality* in its ordinary sense—as altogether unattainable by man apart from *eternal life* in its highest sense?

ATHENAGORAS of Athens—*Philosopher and Christian*.—Here is a writer of another class altogether, who has something to say upon the immortality of man. His apology to the Emperors Aurelius and Commodus in A.D. 177, and his treatise on the Resurrection of the Body, are conspicuous among the writings of that period for elegance and power. The subject of the resurrection is treated purely in the way of argument, there being no appeal to the authority of Scripture, nor even to the resurrection of Christ in support of ours. And, in pleading for the unlimited perpetuity of human

<sup>4</sup> We may suppose this to be the meaning of the strange expression, θεός.

<sup>5</sup> It seems impossible not to connect this with the references by the same writer to the words in Rom. ii. 7.



existence—which he does as a matter of ethical principle—he builds his whole argument upon these two things—the object of God in bestowing such existence, and the right employment of the rational nature by those who have received it. From all this it should follow that *actual immortality* is for those only who have employed their nature in accordance with the divine design in bestowing it. And such is, demonstrably, we believe, the conclusion to which the writer himself comes. Without any of that formality of statement which we find in Irenaeus, Theophilus, Tatian, regarding the *posse* and *esse* of immortality, the argument of Athenagoras, with all its able and elegant pleading, really amounts to the same thing. He does not choose, indeed, to say much about the *term* of future existence as in store for the wicked; while about their ‘destruction’ he does not say a word—that not entering into his plan. But certainly his argument leaves no room for any eternity, whether of ‘suffering’ or of ‘restoration’ to them. This we venture to present as a fair statement of a very plain case; and we have little fear of any one concluding differently who will carefully consider the following extracts—embodying, as we believe, the whole of the argument—not omitting the strongest of the expressions that might seem to militate against our position. These last occur in the *Apology* (c. 31)\*—

“After the present life we shall live another . . . a better . . . a heavenly . . . near to God . . . free from all change and suffering in the soul . . . or, falling with the rest, a

\* See Ante-Nicene Christian Library—Roberts and Donaldson.

worse one, and in fire. For God has not made us sheep or beasts of burden, a mere by-work, that we should perish and be annihilated."

According to this, then, the 'better life' is 'free from change;' the 'worse one' is 'in fire'—being distinctly opposed to a mere 'annihilation,' 'after the present life.' It by no means follows that the 'worse life,' because not annihilated *at the close of the 'present life,'* is actually endless. Nor will the author's reasoning in his treatise on *The Resurrection* permit us to think so. For thus he teaches—

"To those who bear upon them the image of the Creator, and are blessed with a rational judgment, the Creator has assigned perpetual duration, in order that, recognising their Maker, and His power and skill, and obeying law and justice, they may pass their whole lives free from suffering in the possession of those *qualities with which they have bravely borne their preceding life.*" (c. 12.) And then he proceeds,—  
"That which was created for the sake of something else will cease to be when that ceases. But that which was created for the very purpose of existing, and living a life naturally suited to it—since the cause (of its existence) is bound up with its nature . . . can never admit of any cause which shall utterly annihilate its existence." After which he argues for "preservation for ever, doing and experiencing what is suitable to one's nature;" and this, as the *only ground of perpetuity*. As to the resurrection, "It is a species of change, and a change *for the better* of what still remains in existence at the time."

Again, "If the Creator made man for an intelligent life, and that, having become a spectator of the grandeur and of the wisdom manifested in all things, he might continue

always in the contemplation of them—*then*, according to the purpose of his Author, and the nature which he has received, *the cause of his creation is a pledge of his continuance for ever.*"

Now every one must allow that *the right use by man of his intelligent nature* in the present life is the only pledge here suggested for his 'continuing always' *in a similar condition*. But it is equally plain that such a use of his nature is represented as "the reason of his creation," and the only 'pledge' which the writer hints at 'of his continuance for ever' *in any state* whatever. The *statement*, in short, of immortality goes no further than the *argument* for it; and the argument goes no further than the right employment of existence now. The conclusion in favour of the immortality of the righteous is thus strictly logical; almost mathematical.

Then, as to the unrighteous, what do we find? Are we told that they must necessarily continue miserable for ever in virtue of their immortal existence?—or because of a demerit which calls for endless punishment? No, the view of Athenagoras is something very different from this; and such as forms no insignificant test of his real sentiments regarding immortality.

They too must rise from the dead, "because the mortal nature is not capable of bearing a punishment commensurate with the more numerous or serious faults." (c. 19.) "The body must be punished," he argues, "for all *its* sins; and the soul equally for *its*. But, as a single death is no adequate punishment for those who deserve to die many times—therefore they must be raised for the endurance of a penalty 'commensurate' with their offences."

This is not the language of one who believed in an unconditional, complete, immortality for all. But it is the language of one who regarded the proper employment of human existence, according to its divine design, as *the one ground of our immortality*; and who, thus arguing for the general *principle* as strongly as he could, had some difficulty in dealing with the *specialty* of *existence abused*. That difficulty appears partly from his evading, as much as possible, the question; partly from his referring, in the very vaguest terms, to the future state of the wicked; while yet the one reason which he gives for their resurrection applies to those only whose crimes, whether for number or character, demand a further retribution. This, surely, is not a writer to be quoted as an advocate of an unconditional immortality.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to mark the difference between Plato and Butler on the one hand, and Athenagoras on the other. *They*, pleading for a natural and unconditional immortality, deal largely in physical and metaphysical considerations. *He* makes no account of any arguments except those of a moral, practical, and circumstantial kind. And why—but because he did not regard immortality as depending upon any other grounds?

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#### NOTE.

*Tatian, the Assyrian*—a pupil of Justin Martyr. This is a writer who can do little credit to either side; and to which of the two he really belongs it is not easy to determine. Thus Dr. Angus—who says on p. 6, "The annihilation of the soul of the wicked was taught by Tatian;" while on p. 7 he says, "Tatian holds that both (body and soul of the wicked) will live again in immortality, and will die continually, while they live on for ever." Now it is to be observed that this is spoken not of men, but of demons—"The demons who abuse the present life for transgression, dying continually even while

they live (*i.e. now*), will have *hereafter* the *same* immortality like that which they had, *during the time* that they lived." Then follows a similar statement regarding wicked men. But it is not easy to see what the writer means by comparing an immortality in the future with *the same as had now*. For my part I must confess that the more I try to understand what Tatian means in his *Oratio adv. Graecos*, cc. 13-15, the less do I succeed. The following is another sample of his style:—"The soul is not immortal, O Greeks, in itself, but mortal. Yet the same can also not die. For, indeed, it dies and is dissolved with the body, if it knows not the truth; but at last it rises again at the end of the world, receiving death by punishment in immortality. And again, it dies not, though it be dissolved for a season, if furnished with the knowledge of God."

## CHAPTER VI.

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA.

OUR view of Christian opinion in the second century would be incomplete without a reference to this distinguished writer, who taught from A.D. 189 to 202, when the persecution forced him away. He died about 220.

Now, if the use, in a single case, of the mere expression 'everlasting punishment' could prove the adherence of a writer to the doctrine in dispute, then Clement, like Ignatius, might be proved to have held it. But this, we trust, will not be maintained after what we have already met with. That one expression—we are not aware of any other—occurs in the small treatise—*Quis dives Salvetur?* The words are these (c. xxxiii.), "You may neglect to honour the friends of God, of which (neglect) the reward is punishment, fiery, eternal" (κόλασις ἔμπυρος αἰώνιος). That the punishment here spoken of is an 'actual destruction' in the sense already contended for—and that the whole expression means *such* a destruction for ever, by the agency of fire—that this is the writer's real meaning we know not how to doubt, after seeing in what light he presents, throughout his writings, the whole subject of future retribution. It is true, he enters upon no formal statement of his belief,

like Justin Martyr; or exposition of principles, like Irenaeus and Theophilus; or strict argument, like Athenagoras. But take him by himself all through; or read him in connection with those others—and how to resist the conclusion that he teaches immortality in the sense of an ENDLESS EXISTENCE, *for the saved alone*, we cannot imagine.

It may be well, then, to give here the various sentences bearing upon our subject—commencing with those in the treatise from which the above quotation is made.<sup>1</sup>

“He that contends rightly, let him hope to obtain the crown of immortality” (*ἀφθαρσίας*, c. iii.)

“The Life (speaking of the young ruler’s application to Jesus) is asked concerning life—the Saviour concerning salvation—the Truth concerning the true immortality (*ἀληθινῆς ἀθαρσίας*)—the Perfect concerning the perfect rest—the Incorruptible concerning the firm incorruption. He is asked—in order that he may display the ground-work of the gospel, that it is the gift of eternal life.” (c. vi.)

Is it not plain from this that Clement regarded ‘immortality,’ not just as a common property of humanity, and needing, in order to actual happiness, the special *addition* of something distinct from itself, under the aspect of eternal life—but as itself something never found in disjunction from that life? And does not that come out still more in his speaking of it as ‘the genuine’ immortality? Does he not plainly hint by this that

<sup>1</sup> For the translation of Clement’s works, except the treatise now quoted, see Ante-Nicene Library, as above. For the original, see Migne’s Edition of the ‘Fathers.’

there was nothing 'genuine' about the 'immortality' which the philosophers taught—nothing 'firm' about their 'incorruption'?

"The first thing is to know God the Eternal, and the Giver of *things eternal*—God who truly is, and who bestows the things that *really are*, that is, the eternal—from whom other objects have both their being and their *continuance*. For ignorance here is *death*, and acquaintance and familiarity with Him, and love and assimilation to Him, the only life." (c. vii.)

We should infer from this that, as there is nothing *eternal* to be had except what God specially *gives*—so there is no *getting* of what is 'truly eternal'—no real 'continuance of being'—but 'death' only to those who are ignorant of God. And it is hardly possible to overlook the contrariety of such a sentiment to the speculations of Plato—in spite of all the admiration which we know that the writer had for the philosophy of the Greeks. The same thought may be of service as we proceed.

He exhorts to the knowledge of God, as their first concern, all who desire to live the real life (*τὴν ὀντως ζωὴν*).

"But if the law of Moses was sufficient to provide eternal life, then the Saviour came in vain. And in vain did one who had fulfilled the law from his youth come *begging* on his knees *immortality from another*" (*ἀθανασία*, c. viii.)

Does not Clement seem from this to have taken the same view of the young man's question as that given above?

The next three sentences should be considered to-



gether, in connection with the important word 'perish' which occurs in them all.

"The wealth of such when possessed is deadly; but, if it *perishes* (*ἀπολλύμενος*) is salutary." (c. xvi.)

"For neither on account of outward beauty shall any one live, nor for the want of it shall *perish*" (*ἀπολείται*, c. xviii.)

"If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; for if it *perish* here (*ἀπόληται*), it shall be made alive there" (*ζωογονήσεται*, cf. Luke xvii. 33. c. xxiv.)

"I am your Nourisher, giving Myself as the bread, which he who tastes shall be in no danger of death—daily bestowing the drink of immortality" (*ἀθανασίας*, c. xxiii.)

"Does any one buy immortality (*ἀφθαρσίαν*) with money?" (c. xxxii.)

*To the Gentiles.*—"He bestows freedom; you flee into bondage. He bestows salvation; you sink down into destruction. He confers everlasting life; and you wait for punishment, and the fire which He hath prepared for the devil, &c. . . . Look to the threatening! Look to the exhortation! Look to the punishment! Why, then, should you any longer change grace into wrath. . . . For great is the grace of His promise. 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice.' . . . And then the true 'to-day,' the never-ending day of God extends over *eternity*. . . . But the rest make light of *immortality*."

What less, then, can we infer from this than that those who 'make light of immortality' never in Clement's view, enter upon an 'eternity,' or a 'never-ending day'? (c. ix.)

"Having wrenched man from destruction (*ἀπωλείας*) He

\* The title of the chapter is—"That those grievously sin who despise or neglect God's gracious calling."

raised him to the skies. . . . Sin is eternal death (θάνατος αἰδῖος). . . . What, then, is the exhortation I give you? I urge you to be saved. This Christ desires. In one word, He freely bestows life on you. And who is He? Briefly learn. The Word of Truth; the Word of incorruption that regenerates man by bringing him back to the truth. . . . He who expels *destruction* and drives away death." . . . And then he proceeds, showing that the alternative is 'salvation' or 'judgment.'<sup>3</sup> (c. xi.)

"Let us receive, to conduct us to immortality (ἀφθαρσίαν) the good charioteer of men. . . . To you still remains this conclusion—to choose which will profit you most, judgment or grace. For I do not think there is room for doubt which of these is the better; nor is it allowable to compare life with *destruction*. . . . If only thou wilt it, thou hast overcome *destruction*." (ἀπόλειαν. c. xii.)

*The Paedagogue.*— "Let us regard His commands and counsels, as the short and straight path to *immortality*" (ἄδιόρητα, i. 3).

Now, what else *can* such an expression mean but an *unending existence?* implying, of course, happiness; without which such existence would not be desirable.

"Being baptized, we are illuminated; illuminated, we become sons; being made sons, we are made perfect; being made perfect, we are *made immortal* (ἀπαθανατιζόμεθα). . . . We have put aside the old man, and have put on the *immortality* (ἀφθαρσίαν) of Christ. . . . We are brought into union with Christ, through His blood, by which we are redeemed; and into *immortality* through His guidance. The spiritual communion of faith, . . . drawing off the lusts of

<sup>3</sup> The title is—"How great are the benefits conferred on *man* through the Advent of Christ."

the flesh *commits man to eternity* along with those who are divine, *immortalizing him*."⁴ (i. 6.)

Now, we can suppose a writer who happened to protest, at the present day, against the popular view of natural immortality, as using certain expressions and definitions not here employed. But, for one who wished simply to teach how immortality was to be got, it is difficult to imagine anything more decisive than the language — "*commits man to eternity, immortalizing him!*"—and this after the various expressions that have just preceded.

"It is time to wound the soul, *not mortally*, securing exemption from *everlasting death* by a little pain." (i. 8.)

If the expression 'not mortally' means, as surely it does—'not putting an end to its life;' then what but *such an end* can be intended by 'everlasting death'?

The following may help to show us Clement's style of thought—

"Dead, we need life; sheep, we need a shepherd; we who are children need a tutor; while universal humanity stands in need of Jesus; so that we may not continue untractable and sinners to the end, and then fall into condemnation; but may be separated from the chaff, and stored up in the paternal garner. For the fan is in the Lord's hands, by which the chaff due to the fire is separated from the wheat. . . . He wishes to save my flesh, by enveloping it in the robe of *immortality* (*ἀφθαρσίας*). . . . We are passing over to *immortality*, and shall not fall into corruption. . . .

⁴ *εἰς αἰδιότητα συστέλλει τὸν ἄνθρωπον τοῖς θεοῖς, ἀπαθανάτιζονσα.*

He assailed them roughly, to drag them from their impetuous rush towards death.”<sup>5</sup> (i. 9.)

Remarking upon Ezek. xviii. 4-9, “He shall surely live, saith the Lord,” he says—

“These words contain a description of the conduct of Christians, a notable exhortation to the blessed life, which is the reward of a life of goodness, everlasting life.” (i. 10.)

“For the soul to cease from inward activity were destruction (*ὀλεθρος*). . . . But, from the practice of watchfulness, it grasps the eternity of life” (*τῆς ζωῆς τὸ αἰδιον*, ii. 9).

In regard to the ‘destruction’ intended, it surely indicates an *end* of the soul. And this might illustrate, by way of contrast, the other expression, if such an expression required any illustration.

*Stromata*.—“Those who choose to live temperately and justly the law *makes immortal*” (*ἀθανατίζει*, i. 27).

“Such is the discipline of wisdom, causing pain in order to produce understanding, and restoring to peace and *immortality*” (*ἀφθαρσίαν*, ii. 2).<sup>6</sup>

“He that loseth his life shall find it, if we only join that which is mortal of us with the immortality of God. . . . It is the will of God [that we should attain] that knowledge of Him which is the communication of *immortality*” (*ἀθανασία*). (iv. 6.)

Thus, according to Clement, we have naturally *no life* except what is *mortal*. But losing that, and through the knowledge of God, we come to partake of *His immortality*.

<sup>5</sup> This chapter is entitled, “God’s prerogative to punish justly;” and yet such are the strongest expressions upon such a subject.

<sup>6</sup> In the same book (c. 15) he quotes Psalm i. 4-6, as if he had no thought of any other meaning than one would naturally attach to it, who believed in ‘destruction.’

We now ask a candid attention to these extracts. Just observe how naturally and freely the earnest writer handles the topic of immortality—as one who had no thought of any other than the natural sense of the words—the sense in which Greeks regularly used them—the same in which Plato had made them so familiar. Observe how, in so distinctly confining ‘immortality’ and ‘incorruptibility’ to the saved, he not only uses the two ordinary words, but joins with them, as entirely synonymous, the special words for ‘eternity’ and ‘the eternal’—speaking also of the saved as being *immortalized*—and that evidently in no rhetorical but a purely didactic sense. Observe how, with the very same view, he speaks of the ‘things that really are,’ and that ‘have continuance.’ See, too, how he speaks of ‘perishing’—with the illustrations of the ‘hand’ and ‘wealth,’ which so clearly fix the meaning attached by him to the term; using, apparently with no other idea, the two ordinary terms for ‘destruction.’ See how he refers to such a subject as the ‘burning of the chaff’—and to the views of perdition presented in Ezek. xviii. and Ps. i., precisely as *we* should do. And all this, with nothing (we will venture to say) on the other side. Will you regard it, then, as at all extravagant, if we now give it as our deliberate conviction that no intelligent jury, undertaking to ascertain the question of *fact*, could come to any other conclusion than that Clement acknowledged no endless existence for man as man (that is to say in virtue, merely, of his humanity) but only through grace and the knowledge of God?

## NOTE.

It may serve to illustrate the very different style which began to prevail in the third century—as compared with what we have just found in Clement and the other writers of the second century—if we add here a sentence or two from Hippolytus, whose *Refutation of Heresies* must have been written after A.D. 222.

Writing of immortality, he says (see *Ante-Nicene Christian Library* as above, vol. ii. p. 48, 49): “For if ye believe that the soul is originated, and is made immortal by God, according to the opinion of Plato [the very thing which Justin Martyr repudiates], we ought not to refuse that God is able to raise the body, which is composed of the same elements, and make it immortal. [This naturally led to the following.] To those who have done well shall be assigned righteously eternal bliss, and to the lovers of iniquity shall be given eternal punishment. And this fire, which is unquenchable and without end, awaits those latter, and a certain fiery worm which dieth not, and which does not waste the body, but continues bursting forth from the body with unending pain. No sleep will give them rest; no night will soothe them; no death will deliver them from punishment; no voice of interceding friends will profit them.”

In Appendix to the same author, containing dubious pieces, we read: “The righteous and wicked shall be raised incorruptible—the righteous to be honoured eternally and to taste immortal joys. Then the son of perdition and his servants are given over to the fire that is never quenched, and to the worm that never sleepeth, and to the outer darkness.” (p. 122.)

## CHAPTER VII.

## IRENÆUS.

THE following from his *Treatise against Heretics*, book ii. chap. xxxiv. is the passage commonly quoted as containing the testimony of Irenæus against the unconditional immortality of man. After showing that souls continue to exist as such in the next world, and answering some objections to the same, he adds (section 3)—“Regarding the saving of men it is said, He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever (Ps. xxi.)—*as if the Father of all conferred endurance for ever and ever (in saeculum saeculi) on those who are saved.* For not of ourselves, nor of our own nature, is life; but it is given according to the grace of God. And therefore he who shall have preserved the grant of life, and rendered thanks to the bestower of it, shall receive length of days for ever and ever. But he who shall cast away that life, and turn out ungrateful to his Maker, *he deprives himself of endurance for ever and ever*; and therefore the Lord said to such, ‘If ye have not been faithful in a little, what great thing will any one give to you?’—signifying, that, since they were ungrateful

in the small matter of temporal life, justly they should not obtain from Him length of days for ever and ever."

This he intends as an answer to the difficulty which some, as he thinks, might feel in regard to the very lengthened continuance of souls which had only lately come into being. It is perfectly consistent with the other idea of Irenæus that the *soul* does not *die*;—death being regarded by him as a process of dissolution only for a material substance like the body—while the soul, instead of *dying*, can only *come to an end*.

Clear, however, as this declaration of belief seems to be—unless otherwise neutralized—yet the application which we make of it has been strongly controverted. "The testimony of Irenæus," says Dr. Angus,<sup>1</sup> "is less clear [*i.e.* in favour of unconditional immortality], but it is on the whole to the same effect. In confuting Platonism, he uses some expressions that are liable to mistake, and speaks of bad men as 'deprived of length of days for ever.' Elsewhere he speaks, again and again, of men as sent away into everlasting punishment."<sup>2</sup> Both Massuet, the Benedictine writer, and Dr. Roberts, the translator, agree in saying that he teaches repeatedly that 'the wicked will exist in misery for ever.'<sup>3</sup> These statements we propose to examine, although not insensible of the difficulty arising from the multiplicity of evidence to the contrary which the writings of Irenæus furnish.

<sup>1</sup> *Three Letters on Future Punishment*.

<sup>2</sup> He refers to bk. iv. 28, 40; v. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ante-Nicene Library*, Iren. i. p. 253.



Let us first see whether there is any want of clearness, or 'liability to mistake,' in the passage just given, and which contains the words—"Deprived of length of days for ever and ever." It must be understood, then, that Irenaeus is arguing against the Gnostics, who derived, he says, some of their chief principles from Plato. Against the Christian doctrine of immortality they brought the objection that souls could be immortal only by being uncreated; for that, if they had a beginning, they must die with the body. His answer is that, in respect to *such* immortality, God stands alone; while, as to all other being, both its commencement and continuance depend entirely on His pleasure. "In one word" (as Massuet puts it) "the scope of Irenaeus is to set up that most true principle, that the will of God must originate and dominate in all things; for that all besides Himself must yield to Him, as being reduced into entire subjection." Nothing can be more certain. But it is altogether another thing when the learned editor urges<sup>4</sup> that Irenaeus is only protesting against the (Platonic and Gnostic) theory of a *natural* and necessary immortality, *independently* of the divine will,—while yet accepting it as God's purpose *to maintain all souls in endless being*. This of course is the only possible ground for Massuet, Dr. Angus, and all who, agreeing with them, claim the support of Irenaeus. How far such a view is tenable will better appear if we take notice of what precedes that portion of the Irenaeian statement quoted at p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> Iren. ii. 34, 2; Massuet's note in Migne's edition.

“For as the heaven, with sun, moon, stars, and all their adornings, were made from nothing, and continue for a long time, according to the will of God—*so also in regard to souls and spirits, and all things which have been made*; they have indeed a beginning, but still they continue as long as God pleases that they should both be and continue. To which belief the prophetic spirit also testifies in saying, ‘He spake, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created; He hath established them for ever, even for ever and ever.’” (Ps. cxlviii. 5, 6. Vulg.) After which he refers to Ps. xxi. 4, stating, as quoted above, that God bestows *continuance for ever on those who are saved*—seeing that life is *His* gift, and is bestowed by Him as an everlasting possession on those only who have well used their temporal endowments.

Now it is in vain to plead that Irenaeus here speaks of *life* merely as a *blessed* existence bestowed upon certain persons who, whether getting *that* or not, are no the less endowed with an *endless* existence. For the whole question which he takes up is just in regard to an *endless continuance of existence*, or possibility of *immortality* for created spirits; and the assertion is that *such existence* is bestowed *only on those who have used well their present life*. The existence of the soul and spirit is even, it will be observed, *put on a level with the existence of material things*—in regard equally to continuance and commencement. Instead of being represented as a thing irrevocably stamped on the constitution of man, it is made to depend entirely upon his character. And how is it to be conceived that Irenaeus, with that Gnostic enemy in front of him, *could* have compared the soul’s continuance in being to that of sun and moon, and

*could* have made its endless duration dependent on its present behaviour—if yet he had believed in its immortality, like his editors and translators now? Has any one attempted to answer that question? It is very easy to say with Massuet, as Dr. Roberts does, that the statement is to be understood in harmony with the repeated assertion of Irenaeus that the wicked will exist in misery for ever; and that it refers, not to annihilation, but to deprivation of *happiness*.<sup>5</sup> Yes, but if I can see that Irenaeus, or any one else, makes as plain a statement as it is possible to make—I cannot deny or question his having made it, because he may have made—if so it seems to me—some incompatible statement elsewhere. My judgment, not to say conscience, cannot thus adapt itself to any foregone conclusion, or theological demand. I must just in such a case say that, as far as I can see, the man has contradicted himself. This is always possible. But that the words of Irenaeus can have the meaning which is attempted to be put upon them is, I will venture to say, not possible. The statements that are gratuitously supposed to necessitate that meaning will come before us afterwards. Meanwhile, it may be well to notice some additional proof that our author did really hold all that he so distinctly asserts in the passage now reviewed. And I will not

<sup>5</sup> It is worthy of note, that while Massuet, in one note pleads that the wicked deprive themselves not of endless existence, but of “the happy continuance of the saints, which is the only true continuance,” he on the same page writes—“Continuance is not here to be taken as where it is said, ‘He that *endureth* to the end,’ &c., but as answering to *διαπορη*.”

shrink from asking any candid man, whether he can resist the conclusion that, with Irenæus, 'everlasting duration of existence,' 'immortality,' and 'eternal life' are convertible terms;—the understanding always being that each of these expressions involves the idea of endless blessedness.

(a) Let us notice, then, the Gnostic opinions as described by Irenæus, against which he is arguing throughout.

Thus he speaks (i. 2, 5)\* of *eternal duration* (αἰώνιος διαμονή) as assigned in the Gnostic system to the aeons.

Again, the Gnostics say "that all that is material must of necessity perish (ἀπόλλυσθαι) as not being capable of the afflatus of incorruption (ἀφθαρσίας); while they themselves, being spiritual, cannot lose (ἀποβάλλειν) their spiritual substance." (i. 6. 1.)

There are three sorts of men, they say, namely, the spiritual, material, and animal—answering to Cain, Abel, and Seth;—of which the *material* kind goes, for certain, into corruption (φθορά) and the *animal* likewise, unless it chooses the good part. (i. 7. 5.)

The Gnostics say, with Plato and others, that God formed the world out of previously existing matter, and that even He cannot give immortality to what is mortal, or incorruption to what is corruptible. (ii. 14. 4.)

"How can they say that the flesh which is nourished with the body of the Lord and His blood goes to corruption (φθοράν), and does not partake of life? . . . Our bodies when they receive the eucharist are no longer corruptible (φθαρτά), having the hope of the resurrection to eternity" (εἰς αἰῶνας, iv. 18. 5).

\* These figures will refer throughout to *Irenæus against Heresies*, book, chapter, and section.

In another place (iv. 37. 6), he argues that the Gnostic opponents of free will reason as if God were either unable to accomplish His will; or ignorant that certain persons being, as they say, by nature *material*, are incapable of receiving this *immortality*.

He speaks (v. 2. 2.) of those who say that the flesh is *not capable of incorruption*; and then asks—"How can they affirm that the flesh is incapable of receiving the gift of God which is life eternal?" (ὅτι αἰώνιος.)

Again, in arguing against the Gnostics (v. 3. 3.), he says that "the flesh, having lost *life*, can regain *incorruption*, which is a *blissful and unending life* granted by God."

Now they made, as we have seen, the same objection to the immortality of certain *souls*, and are answered by him in the same way throughout.

Once more (v. 19. 2.) he indicates another of the Gnostic ideas—still making the same application of the same important words—"Some affirm that neither their soul nor their body can receive eternal life, but only their inner man."

Thus we see that the Gnostics *affirmed* the *necessary* immortality of certain human beings, as such; while, in regard to some, they allowed, and, in regard to others, denied even the *possibility* of it. What *they* meant by 'immortality' is unquestionable. On the other hand, we have seen, and shall still see, how Irenaeus, denying—and of course in the same sense—a necessary immortality to any, affirms—and in the same sense—the possibility of it for all; but always on the basis of the gospel provision.

(b) Let us now look at some passages in which Irenaeus speaks plainly, as in the one quoted at p. 336. above, of *unbroken existence* as the portion of *some only*.

"The unbelievers and blinded of this world shall not inherit the world of life which is to come" (*venturum vite saeculum*, iii. 7. 2).

After quoting Psalm cii. 26–28 : "They shall perish, but Thou art the same; the children of Thy servants shall continue," he adds, "Thus pointing out plainly what things they are that are to pass away, and who it is that doth endure for ever, God together with His servants, as in Isaiah li. 6." (iv. 3.)

Upon Matt. xxii. 29, he remarks—"For if He be not the God of the dead but of the living, and yet was called the God of the Fathers who were sleeping, then they do indubitably live to God, and have not passed out of existence," [and why?] "since they are the children of the resurrection. But our Lord Himself is the resurrection." (iv. 5, 2.)

With God (he says, iv. 38. 3) are power, wisdom, and goodness;—power creating; wisdom arranging: while, through goodness, certain things receive growth and *continue for a long time* (ἐπὶ πλεῖον ἐπιμένοντες); and by their *continuing for long ages* (παραμένειν μακροῖς αἰώσι) they shall receive a faculty (δύναμιν) of the uncreated; God gratuitously bestowing upon them continuance for ever (προῖκα δωρουμένου αὐτοῖς τὴν εἰς ἀεὶ παραμονήν). And thus in all things God has the preeminence . . . being the primary cause of existence (τοῦ εἶναι). [And then to show how this applies to us—if, indeed, misapprehension were possible.] "But subjection to God is immortality (ὑποταγὴ δὲ Θεοῦ ἀφθαρσία). For God is yet to be seen; and the seeing of God is productive of immortality; and incorruption causes to be near to God."

He speaks in v. 2. 2 (just after the quotation made above from the same passage) of "the resurrection, in which God bestows upon the mortal immortality, and upon the corruptible incorruption; that we may not be puffed up, as if we had life in ourselves; but may learn by experience that we have

the everlasting duration (τὴν εἰς αἰὲ παρὰμονὴν) from His excellency, not from our nature, and thus may never wander from the truth." It is not thus that one would speak who believed that *man* was *made* immortal in the first Adam, or *proved* to be so in the cross of the second.

(c) Illustrations of the manner in which Irenaeus speaks of *Immortality*.

It has always been, he maintains (i. 10. 1.), an article of the faith of the universal Church, that "God bestows life, and will confer immortality on the righteous (ζωὴν χαρισάμενος, ἀφθαρσίαν δωρήσεται), and surround them with everlasting glory."

"Christ restored liberty to man, and bestowed on them the inheritance of incorruption." (iii. 5. 3.)

"It is fit that the Church should have four pillars (viz. the gospels) breathing out immortality (ἀφθαρσίαν) on every side." (iii. 2. 8.)

"Those who assert that Jesus was simply a man are in a state of death. Being ignorant of Him they are deprived of His gift, which is *eternal life*. For by no other means could we have attained to *incorruptibility* and *immortality*, unless first incorruptibility and immortality had become that which we also are—so that the corruptible might be swallowed up by incorruptibility, and the mortal by immortality, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (iii. 19. 1.)

"This was the object of God's longsuffering, that man, thus redeemed, and rising from the dead, may always live in gratitude to the Lord, having received from Him the gift of incorruptibility—knowing in himself how corruptible and weak he is, but God immortal to such a degree as to confer immortality upon that which is weak, and eternity upon that which is temporal."

Is this the language of those who believe that man never was without a *never-dying* soul?

"God hath concluded all in unbelief, says Paul, in reference to man who had been disobedient to God, and who, *being cast off from immortality*, then obtained mercy." (iii. 20. 2.)

Referring to Matthew viii. 11; Luke xiii. 28, he says, "Those, then, who deny His salvation, and frame the idea of another God, are outside the kingdom, and are disinherited from incorruption, setting at nought God who introduces Abraham to the kingdom of God, and his seed, *i.e.* the Church, upon which also is conferred the adoption and inheritance promised to Abraham." . . . "He Himself suffered death that exiled man might go forth from condemnation, and return without fear to his own inheritance." (iv. 8. 1, 2.)

"He grants to those who follow and serve Him life, and incorruptibility, and eternal glory." (iv. 14. 1.)

"God has given freedom to man, that those who do not obey might be righteously judged . . . and those who have obeyed and believed on Him should be honoured with immortality." (iv. 15. 2.)

In iv. 20. 3, 5, 6, we have these thoughts—Christ was exalted, that thus man might attain to *immortality* . . . The Son leads to the Father, whilst the Father confers *incorruptibility unto eternal life*, which comes to every one from the fact of his serving God . . . He has rendered Himself visible that He might vivify (*ζωοποιῶν*) those who receive and behold Him by faith. For as His greatness is past finding out, so also is His goodness beyond expression; by which having been seen, He bestows life on those who see Him. It is not possible to live apart from Him, and the means of life is found in fellowship with God. Men therefore shall see God that they may live, *being made immortal* by that sight, and attaining even unto God.



Again (iv. 24. 2), "the Apostolic doctrine is that they who believe in Him shall be *immortal*, and free from suffering."

Quoting Matt. xx. 1, he says, "They all received a penny each man, having upon it the royal image and superscription—the knowledge of the Son of God, which is immortality." (iv. 36. 7.)

"He came as a man that we may be able to contain in ourselves the bread of immortality (*ἀθάνασις*), which is the Spirit of the Father." (iv. 38. 1.) Did the writer of this regard carnal men also as immortal?

"It was needful that the nature of man should first be displayed (as to its weakness); then that the mortal should be conquered, and swallowed up by immortality, and the corruptible by incorruptibility; and that man should be made after the likeness of God, having received the knowledge of good and evil." (iv. 38. 4.)

In iv. 39 we find the following ideas—"To believe and obey God, this is the life of man; not to obey is his death. Man learning that it is an evil thing which deprives him of life, *i.e.* disobedience, should never attempt it. Whereas, knowing what *preserves his life*, namely, obedience, he is bound to observe that with all earnestness. He who neglects this divests himself unawares of what is human, and kills the very man himself. How, then, shall he be a god who has not yet become a man? How can he be immortal who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?"

He argues (iv. 41) that, though we are in one sense sons of God by nature, yet those who disobey have ceased to be His sons, and are incapable of receiving the inheritance. Isaiah calls them Sodomites, saying, "Wash you, make you clean"—intimating that, when they should be converted and repent, they should have power to become the sons of God, and to receive the inheritance of *immortality* which is bestowed by Him.

"We (speaking of believers, v. 1) who were but lately created by the only good and best Being, who also has the gift of *immortality*, have received according to the ministration of the Word . . . attaching man to God by His own incarnation, and securely and truly bestowing on us, at His coming, *immortality*, by means of communion with God."

Can any one doubt, after all this, what Irenaeus means by 'immortality,' and how he considers it is to become the possession of man?

(d) Passages in which Irenaeus speaks of *losing* and *perishing*.

"Unless man had been joined to God he could never have been able to partake of incorruption (τῆς ἀφθαρσίας) . . . Through Adam the many were made sinners, and *lost* their life (ἀπέβαλον τὴν ζωὴν) . . . God chose to recapitulate in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, empty out death, and vivify man." (iii. 18. 7.)

He says (iii. 20. 1) that, as God suffered Jonah to be swallowed up by the whale—not that he should *perish* altogether, but might be the more subject to God, and might bring the Ninevites to say, "Who knoweth if God will turn away His anger that we *perish* not?"—so also did God permit man to be swallowed up by the whale, or author of his transgression, not that he should altogether *perish* when so engulfed. This was done that man, receiving from God an unhopèd-for salvation, might rise from the dead and glorify God, never supposing that the incorruptibility which belongs to him is his naturally.

Here surely to *perish* and to *have immortality* are represented as exact contraries.

Irenaeus pleads against Tatian that Adam must needs have been saved, on the ground that a proper title for the inheri-

tance of children must come down from the father. In support of this view he urges that "if man, who had been created by God that he might live, after *losing* life through the serpent, should not any more return to life, but be utterly abandoned to death, then God would have been conquered." Instead of this God has, by the second Adam, "abolished death, vivifying that man who had been in a state of death." "Thus God did not choose that they should *perish* altogether when cursed by Him." . . . "They therefore speak falsely who deny Adam's salvation, thus shutting themselves out for ever from life, in that they believe not that the sheep which had been *lost* was found. For if it was not found the whole race of man is still held in *perdition*." (iii. 23.)

"He said to His disciples, Go to the sheep of the house of Israel which *were lost* (*perierunt*). Man can be saved in no other way from the old wound of the serpent than by believing on Him who, in the likeness of sinful flesh, is lifted up from the earth, and draws all things to Himself, and vivifies the dead." (iv. 2, 7.)

"If thou, being hardened, dost reject the operation of His skill thou hast *lost* both His workmanship and life too." "If, then, thou deliver up to Him what is thine thou shalt receive His handiwork, and be a perfect work of God." (iv. 39.)

Once more (v. 12. 2), "As he who was made a living soul *lost* (*ἀπώλεσε*) life when he turned aside to what was evil, so again when coming back to the better, and receiving the quickening (*ζωοποιούν*) Spirit, he shall find life."

It may be of consequence to observe here, that from

<sup>7</sup> To the same purpose, speaking of our death through Adam, and life through Christ, he makes the very important distinction—"that as in the one we *all were dead*, so in the other we *all may be made alive*." (v. 1. 3.)

the light manner in which the Gnostics treated all future punishment or suffering, it was the more incumbent on Irenæus to treat it with great seriousness.

Thus he tells us (i. 3. 5.) that "they explain the fan, in Matt. iii. 12, as being the cross which consumes (*ἀναλίσκει*) all material objects as fire does chaff, but purifies all that are saved as a fan does wheat. And they maintain that the Apostle spoke with the same view in 1 Cor. i. 18." It thus appears that, however Irenæus might dissent from their doctrine, he had nothing to say against their understanding of the words *chaff* and *wheat*, *consume* and *perish*.

Again (i. 7. 1), "They say that the fire within the earth shall burst forth and destroy all matter, and be itself extinguished with it, and have no further existence."

Thus lightly did the Gnostics treat the subject. And now for Irenæus. The following extracts omit, I believe, nothing of consequence.

(e) He declares it to be (i. 10. 1) an article "in the faith of the universal Church, that Jesus will send the apostate angels, with ungodly men, into *the* everlasting fire."

"When the number is complete which He hath pre-determined with Himself, all who are inscribed for life shall rise again, having their own bodies and spirits in which they pleased God. But those who are worthy of punishment (*κολάσεως*) shall go away into the same, they also having their own souls, and their own bodies, in which they stood apart from the grace of God." (ii. 33. 5.)

"The Saviour of those who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, sending into (the<sup>s</sup>) eternal fire those who alter the truth," &c. (iii. 4. 2.)

"As also the Lord says to them on the left hand, 'Depart

<sup>s</sup> The *article* is wanting here, as the passage is found only in Latin.

from me, ye cursed, into (the) everlasting fire which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels'—indicating that eternal fire was not originally prepared for man, but for the chief and members of the apostacy—which (fire) indeed they shall justly feel who like him persevere in wickedness." (iii. 23.)

"Jerusalem was rejected, as the twigs are lopt off and thrown away after having served for the ripening of the grapes; and so the fashion of the whole world must pass away, when the time for its disappearance has come, that the fruit may be gathered into the garner, but the chaff which is left behind consumed with fire—as in Mal. iv. 1; Matt. iii. 11, 12 . . . Now the wheat and chaff are by nature irrational. But man, endowed with reason, and in this respect like God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself the cause that sometimes he becomes wheat and sometimes chaff." (iv. 4. 3.)

A strange style of illustration surely for a writer supposed to teach an endless state of suffering!

"For this purpose did the Father reveal the Son, that through Him He might be manifested to all, and might receive into incorruption those righteous ones who believe in Him; but He shall righteously shut into the outer darkness, which they have chosen for themselves, those who do not believe." (iv. 6. 5.)

I infer from this that the writer holds *immortality* and *outer darkness* to be incompatible ideas.

"To those who reject (salvation) He has assigned everlasting perdition by cutting them off from life." (iv. 11. 4.)

"As *then* the unrighteous and idolators *lost their life*, so also is it *now*; for both the Lord declares that such persons are sent into (the) eternal fire, and the apostle says in 1 Cor.

vi. 9, 10, that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And just as then those who led vicious lives were condemned and cast out, so also even now the offending eye is plucked out, and the foot and the hand; lest the rest of the body *perish in like manner.*" (iv. 27. 4.) He then quotes 2 Thess. i. 9—where we find in the Latin, and only copy, the very simple and distinct word *interitus* used to express ὀλεθρος, "destruction."<sup>9</sup>

We now come (iv. 28. 1-3) to the passages referred to by Dr. Angus as containing the expressions which he counts sufficient to establish his view of Irenæus.

"In both Testaments there is the same righteousness of God displayed when God takes vengeance—in the one case typically, temporally, and more moderately; but in the other really, enduringly (*semper*), and more rigidly; for the fire is eternal; and the wrath of God which shall be revealed from heaven entails a heavier punishment on those who incur it. And therefore they are devoid of sense who speak only of God's compassion, and keep silence regarding the judgment as expressed in Matthew xxv. 24; x. 15."

The obligation to holiness, he urges, is increased by the New Testament, and "so also is the punishment of those who do not believe the word of God—being not merely temporal, but rendered also eternal. For to whomsoever the Lord shall say, Depart, these shall be damned for ever; and to whom He shall say, Come, these do receive the kingdom for ever."

"The Lord judges for eternity those whom He doth judge; and lets go free for eternity those whom He doth let go free."

He quotes 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16—adding, "To whom is there

<sup>9</sup> *Poenas pendent interitus aeternas.* The translator of *this* passage in Roberts' *Ante-Nic. Libr.* gives '*death.*' The other translator had given '*perdition*' in rendering the same in a previous passage.

the savour of *death unto death*, but to those who believe not? . . . And who are they that did even *then* give themselves over to death? . . . And who are they that are saved *now*, and receive 'life eternal'?"

Now we have seen what Irenaeus means by the dying *then*; and we need have no doubt after the above evidence how he understood *life eternal*. From all which it very plainly appears how he understood '*death unto death*.'

"He will come in the clouds, ushering in the day which burns as a furnace, and smiting the earth with the word of His mouth, and slaying the impious with the breath of His lips, and having a fan in His hand, and cleansing His floor, and gathering the wheat into His barn, but burning up the *chaff*," &c. (iv. 33. 1.)

He again quotes (iv. 33. 11) Matt. iii. 12, in connection with ch. xxv. 41, and 2 Thess. i. 9, with the same Latin rendering, *interitus*, for *destruction*.

He argues that, as in works, so in faith, man has entire free will, and for this reason "he that believeth on Him has eternal life; but he who believeth not the Son *hath not eternal life*, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (iv. 37. 5.)

Now if we are to be always satisfied with our own idea that 'eternal life' can only mean the *happy* form of an everlasting existence common to all, then of course a state of 'wrath' will be the *unhappy* form of the same existence; and 'everlasting fire' the place, or the instrument of its infliction. But if we can only consent to let Irenaeus explain that, by 'eternal life,' he means 'immortality' or 'continuance for ever'—this

being with him a state *invariably happy*—then all the expressions, which are so confidently appealed to as fastening upon him the opposite view, will fall into their right place.

“Since all good things are from God, they who fly from God deprive themselves of all good things . . . and fall under the just judgment of God. . . For those who avoid the light shall justly dwell in darkness. . . Those who fly from the light of God, which contains in itself all good things, are themselves the cause of their inhabiting ‘eternal darkness.’” (iv. 39.)

Now among “all good things” Irenæus certainly classes that immortality which he constantly represents as the chief good. If, in short, the ‘good things’ come from the ‘goodness’ of God, then, as may be seen above, the very first operation of that attribute, as described by our author, is no other than just this—the *bestowing upon man of continuance for ever*. (See p. 336.)

And to the same effect (c. 40)—“It is the same God who has prepared good things with Himself for those who desire His fellowship, and remain in subjection to Him [which he says elsewhere is ‘immortality’], who has prepared the eternal fire for the chief of the apostacy and his fellows—into which the Lord has declared that those shall be sent who have separated themselves to the left . . . even eternal fire and outer darkness, which things are evil to those who shall fall into them.” (iv. 40.) That is to say, it will be no such gentle end as the Gnostics dreamt of.

“He has prepared eternal fire for every kind of apostacy.” (v. 26. 2.)

We now come to (v. 27) another of the portions singled out by Dr. Angus. Let us see what it teaches.



In § 1 Irenaeus simply quotes Luke xvii. 24; Matt. xiii. 30; xxv. 33, &c.; Luke x. 12.

In § 2 we read—"Communion with God is life and light; separation from Him is death and darkness, and consists in the loss of all the benefits which He has in store [of which, as we have seen throughout, *immortality* is the chief]. "Those, therefore, who by apostacy cast away (*ἀποβαλόντες*) these things, as being deprived of all the good things, do experience all punishment" (*ἐν πάσῃ κολάσει καταγίνονται*, that is to say, every kind for which there is room in the loss of the chief good, 'immortality'). "Not that God punishes them of purpose; but that punishment follows because of their being deprived of all good. But eternal and endless are the good things from (or, with) God; and therefore also the loss of them is eternal and endless. For as those who have brought blindness upon themselves are for ever deprived of the enjoyment of light—so he that believeth not is condemned, *i.e.* he has separated himself from God of his own accord."

Again (v. 28. 1), "Those who are in the light partake of its good things; but those who are in the darkness of calamities; and these He will send into the eternal fire, because they have deprived themselves of all the good things."

Towards the close of the book (v. 35) he quotes from Rev. xx. 12-15, remarking, "This is what the Lord called (the) eternal fire." And then any one reading to the end might *almost* think that the author considered this fire to *cease*, and the scene in Rev. xxi. to *succeed* to it—so little inclined is he to put forward anything like an everlasting continuance in suffering.

What, then, shall we now say to the testimony of Irenaeus? Dr. Angus says "it is less clear, but, on the whole, to the same effect." Less clear! I can conceive

of nothing more clear. It is (with the exception of a few peculiar ideas) precisely what *we* believe and assert. The substance of it is the same, the spirit is the same, the language is the same. "In confuting Platonism," (qy. Gnosticism?) Irenæus teaches, with great fulness, frequency, and variety of expression—what? The essential immortality of man—that is to say, immortality according to some irrevocable, divine purpose? No, but just the contrary of this in every shape. Surely, then, it would be startling, even beyond a parallel, if after all—not in different treatises, perhaps thirty years apart, but in the same great and careful work—this good and able man should be found writing with the same pen, that those were doomed to everlasting *suffering* from whom he had already cut off all chance of everlasting *existence*. No—we may keep ourselves easy about that, if at any time asked to read or to hear some expressions from Irenæus regarding the future of the lost. Dr. Roberts may "agree with Massuet in saying that he teaches repeatedly that 'the wicked will exist in misery for ever.'" And many will gladly avail themselves of so short a road to a conclusion which they count so desirable. But I will take the liberty of saying that it was not in so summary a way that Dr. Roberts either came himself, or brought others, in spite of the formidable obstacles of learning and numbers, to some of those noble conclusions for which we are so deeply indebted to him. And so, instead of yielding to the passages which our friends allege against us, we simply claim them as our own. In these also Irenæus speaks

*as we speak.* He freely quotes those passages which we too quote freely. And he quotes them in the connection in which the Scripture presents them—as part, that is, of a revelation which had also taught that the lover of the world should *lose* his soul; that God would *destroy* both body and soul in hell; the unquenchable fire *burning up* the chaff. He teaches, in a word, that *they* should go into *the* everlasting fire, and undergo everlasting punishment, whom he had by almost every form of speech declared to be utterly bereft of immortality and continuance.<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus believes, in short, as we do—and his belief is far too evident to require any special modesty on our part in the stating of it—that *everlasting punishment* means *everlasting destruction*, and that fire is the instrument of that destruction. In opposition to Gnostics, and enemies of every name, he declares that for those who live and die without God there is no brighter prospect throughout eternity than this.

Such is the testimony of Irenaeus—so strong and calm, so clear and full. Nor is it merely the testimony of an individual, even though second to none of his contemporaries for character and influence—but of one professing to speak for the entire church from apostolic times. We cannot but thank God for the testimony—furnishing, as it does, another and so valuable a proof of how the men of that age could speak of the everlasting punishment of those whom they never forgot to represent as *not immortal*.

<sup>1</sup> We have seen how positively he denies them all share in *ἀθάνατα*, ἀφθάρτα, διαμωή, παρὰμωή, παραμένειν.

# INDEX.

## PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE COMMENTED ON, OR INCIDENTALLY ILLUSTRATED.

Genesis ....	1. 26	. . .	page 14.
	2. 7	. . . . .	14.
	2. 17	. . . . .	21-26.
	3. 15	. . . . .	224.
	3. 19	. . . . .	24.
Exodus ....	3. 22, 24	. . . . .	24-26.
	3. 14	. . . . .	75.
	13. 7	. . . . .	83.
Leviticus ..	18. 5	. . . . .	26.
Numbers ..	32. 39	. . . . .	88.
Deuteronomy	2. 33, 34	. . . . .	88.
Psalms ....	1. 6	. . . . .	333.
	21. 4	. . . . .	336.
	37. 10, 36	. . . . .	296.
	37. 20	. . . . .	80.
	102. 26-28	. . . . .	343.
	148. 6	. . . . .	339.
Proverbs ....	1. 32	. . . . .	87.
	29. 18	. . . . .	87.
Ecclesiastes..	3. 11	. . . . .	19 (note).
	3. 21	. . . . .	18.
	7. 7	. . . . .	85.
	12. 7	. . . . .	18.
Isaiah .....	1. 10, 16	. . . . .	346.
	9. 6	. . . . .	78.
	14. 20	. . . . .	82.
	33. 14	. . . . .	15-17.
Jeremiah ...	4. 9	. . . . .	85.
	23. 1	. . . . .	85.
	48. 8	. . . . .	84.

Ezekiel	....	18. 4-9	. . .	page	27.
Daniel	.....	12. 2	. . . . .		17.
Hosea	.....	4. 6	. . . . .		87.
		13. 9	. . . . .		87.
Jonah	.....	3. 9	. . . . .		346.
Matthew	....	3. 12	. . . . .		119-122.
		5. 21, 22	. . . . .		126.
		5. 29, 30	. . . . .		110, 145.
		5. 9	. . . . .		234.
		7. 13	. . . . .		122.
		7. 26, 27	. . . . .		123.
		8. 11	. . . . .		345.
		10. 6	. . . . .		100.
		10. 28	. . . . .		93-95.
		13. 30	. . . . .		40-42, 122.
		13. 47-50	. . . . .		123.
		15. 24	. . . . .		100.
		16. 26	. . . . .		105-107.
		18. 8	. . . . .		145-153.
		18. 11	. . . . .		101.
		18. 14	. . . . .		110.
		19. 16	. . . . .		328, 329.
		21. 44	. . . . .		124.
		22. 7, 13	. . . . .		128.
		24. 51	. . . . .		158.
		25. 30	. . . . .		128.
		25. 41	. . . . .		145-153.
		25. 46	. . . . .		138-144.
Mark	.....	1. 24	. . . . .		91.
		3. 29	. . . . .		134-137.
		8. 36	. . . . .		105-107.
		9. 43-48	. . . . .		132-134.
		10. 45	. . . . .		212.
Luke	.....	3. 9-17	. . . . .		118, 119.
		3. 38	. . . . .		233.
		4. 34	. . . . .		91.
		9. 25	. . . . .		102-105.
		12. 4, 5	. . . . .		96 (note).
		12. 47, 48	. . . . .		129.
		13. 3, 5	. . . . .		110.
		13. 27, 28	. . . . .		128.

# INDEX.

339

Luke	.....	15. 17	. . . .	page 109.
		15. 24	. . . .	102.
		16. 11	. . . .	336.
		16. 26	. . . .	131.
		19. 10	. . . .	101.
		20. 35, 36	. . . .	30, 31, 43-45.
John	.....	2. 19	. . . .	90.
		3. 14-16	. . . .	50, 110-117, 210.
		3. 36	. . . .	52.
		5. 21-26	. . . .	56-59, 67.
		5. 26	. . . .	78.
		6. 40, 47, 49, 50-58	. . . .	54-56.
		6. 57	. . . .	77.
		10. 28	. . . .	53.
		11. 26	. . . .	56.
		12. 25	. . . .	54.
		12. 33	. . . .	238.
		14. 19	. . . .	77.
		15. 6	. . . .	122.
		17. 2	. . . .	60.
		17. 3	. . . .	65.
		18. 14	. . . .	109.
Acts	.....	3. 21	. . . .	155.
		3. 23	. . . .	242.
		8. 20	. . . .	155.
		13. 41	. . . .	156.
Romans	....	1. 32	. . . .	157.
		2. 7	. . . .	36, 319-321.
		2. 12	. . . .	156, 159.
		5. 12-21	. . . .	36-39.
		6. 22	. . . .	65.
		8. 6	. . . .	64.
		8. 10	. . . .	158.
		8. 13	. . . .	68.
		9. 22	. . . .	160.
		14. 15	. . . .	162-164.
1 Corinthians		1. 18	. . . .	167.
		5. 5	. . . .	168 (note).
		8. 11	. . . .	162, 164.
		15. 18, 32	. . . .	169-172.
		15. 22	. . . .	222.

1 Corinthians	15. 26	. . .	page 243.
	15. 28	. . .	245-253.
	15. 46, 47-49	. .	172.
2 Corinthians	2. 15	. . .	168.
Ephesians ..	1. 10	. . .	238.
Philippians ..	1. 28	. . .	175.
	2. 10, 11	. . .	243.
	3. 19	. . .	175.
Colossians ..	1. 20	. . .	239.
2 Thess. ....	1. 7-9	. . .	176-181, 183.
	1. 9	. . .	139.
	2. 3	. . .	181.
1 Timothy ..	2. 4	. . .	239.
	4. 10	. . .	240.
	6. 9	. . .	182.
	6. 16	. . .	76.
2 Timothy ..	1. 10	. . .	32-35.
Hebrews ....	10. 26	. . .	184.
	10. 39	. . .	185.
	12. 29	. . .	185, 217.
James .....	1. 15	. . .	186.
	1. 18	. . .	237.
	4. 12	. . .	186, 305.
1 Peter ....	1. 23, 25	. . .	66.
2 Peter ....	1. 3	. . .	65.
	2. 1-3, 9, 12	. .	186, 187.
	3. 7-9	. . .	187, 188.
1 John ....	2. 7	. . .	39.
	3. 8	. . .	242.
	4. 16	. . .	217, 218, 241.
	5. 16	. . .	189.
Jude .....	7	. . .	152, 189.
	5, 11, 13	. . .	190.
Revelation ..	2. 7	. . .	193.
	2. 1	. . .	194 (and note).
	9. 11	. . .	194 (note).
	14. 11	. . .	200-202.
	19. 3	. . .	196-198.
	20. 10	. . .	198-200.
	20. 12, 15	. . .	193.
	20. 14, 15	. . .	194-196.
	21. 27	. . .	193.

